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ABSTRACT

Recognizing that there is a growing communications gap in the nation, the Agricultural Board of the National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council organized a Workshop on Communication for Change with the Rural Disadvantaged held in early November of 1970. Because communication has many facets, participants were chosen from a diverse array. The workshop included persons from the academic community who had made studies of one or another aspect of the problem, representatives of various governmental and private agencies who work with the disadvantaged, and representatives of disadvantaged, groups. The workshop proceedings have been prepared with a view to preserving the scholarly aspects of analysis and research, on the one hand, and the flavor and impact of the responses of those who spoke for the disadvantaged, on the other. The following papers are presented in the proceedings publication: Nature of the Communication Process, Talking with the Poor, Goals in Communication with the Disadvantaged, Difficulties Faced in Achieving the Goals, Some Characteristics of Oranizations That Affect Two-Way Communication, What Our Experiences Reveal, Characteristics of the Disadvantaged as They Affect Communication, Why Communication Is Difficult, Methods of Successful Communication with the Disadvantaged, and, Why Methods Fail. Summaries of discussions held are also included. (LS)

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Communication for Change with the Rural Disadvantaged

A WORKSHOP

AGRICULTURAL BOARD
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 1972

RC 005951

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NOTICE: The Workshop was undertaken under the aegis of the National Research Council with the approval of its Governing Board. Such approval indicates that the Board considered the problem of national significance and that the resources of NRC were particularly suitable to the conduct of the project.

The participants in the Workshop were selected for their individual competence and judgment, with due consideration for the balance and breadth of experience and background. Responsibility for all aspects of this report rests with the organizing committee and the participants, to whom we express our sincere appreciation.

Although reports are not submitted for approval to the Academy membership or to the Council, each is reviewed according to procedures established and monitored by the Academy's Report Review Committee. The report is distributed only after satisfactory completion of this review process.

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Preface

Recognizing that there is a growing communications gap in the nation, the Agricultural Board of the National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council organized a Workshop on Communication for Change with the Rural Disadvantaged in Washington, D.C., in early November of 1970. Because communication has many facets, participants were chosen from a diverse array. The Workshop included persons from the academic community who had made studies of one or another aspect of the problem, representatives of various governmental and private agencies who work with the disadvantaged, and representatives of the disadvantaged groups themselves. Because of this diversity, the Workshop departed from the traditional academic format.

These proceedings have been prepared with a view to preserving the scholarly aspects of analysis and research, on the one hand, and the flavor and impact of the responses of those who spoke for the disadvantaged, on the other.

We are especially appreciative of the efforts of Robert H. Crawford, of Cornell University, who undertook to review the manuscripts, panel discussion summaries, and tapes and from these prepared the General Summary.

WORKSHOP ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
M. E. John, *Chairman*
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Walter Coward, Jr.
Robert H. Crawford
Paul R. Eberts
Jack McCormack
Ronald Powers

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Introduction

Increasing attention is being given to cross-cultural communication on a global level. Geographic barriers are diminishing in importance as travel accelerates and business, government, and private interests span continents. But at the same time, rapidly shifting conditions are leading to increased stratification and alienation between various segments of society in America.

This situation is not new. There have always been disadvantaged elements and, because the term is relative, there probably always will be. But the problem is becoming acute because modern mass media display an affluent way of life to segments of society that cannot now hope to participate; they parade enticing opportunities before those who traditionally have been blocked from taking advantage of them; they present a massively "establishment" world view to persons who have become skeptical or hostile to that view. Indeed, the disadvantaged are inundated with communication daily. The problem lies in the nature of the message they derive from this flood and their reaction to it. Is it a message of hope or of despair? Does it help them or does it lure them deeper into debt?

Today government, industry, and private agencies are making unprecedented efforts to work with disadvantaged groups. Major programs are under way to improve nutritional standards of rural and urban poor, to train and find employment for the hard-core unemployed, to rebuild the welfare system with new incentives for personal initiative, and to stimulate self-help projects in depressed areas. Educators are seriously examining the question of school dropouts and are finding that an important contributing factor is the "culture gap" between the middle-class-oriented school system and the lower-class values of many with whom it deals. Employers are recognizing that traditional hiring standards are often of limited relevance to actual job requirements and are revising their procedures accordingly.

There remains, however, a major communications gap. Third- or fourth-generation residents of urban ghettos or marginal farms tend to hold world views very different from those held by mainstream, upwardly mobile, middle-class Americans. While English is for most the common language, the semantic content of countless key words varies widely. "Education," for instance, may connote "opportunity," "success," or "progress" for members of one group; for another it may mean "irrelevance," "waste of time," and "interference with freedom to get a job."

It becomes increasingly urgent that means be found to communicate effectively between the various American subcultures. Although much has been written on various aspects of this issue, little of this material directly confronts the question of how best to communicate with disadvantaged people.

Too often major programs designed to serve the disadvantaged fail to reach any significant portion of the intended beneficiaries. Is it because the programs are ill-designed or ill-administered? Are they based on false premises regarding the needs or aspirations of the rural disadvantaged? Is there an inadequate assessment of the ability of people to meet the minimum requirements for participation? Is there a breakdown in the matter of informing people of the existence of the programs established for their benefit and how best to take advantage of them?

General Summary

Communication for change with the rural disadvantaged is complex. One must know what it is that he wishes to communicate, which requires a knowledge of the needs of the disadvantaged and the changes that are to be sought. One must formulate messages in a way that can be understood and accepted by the audience, which requires a knowledge of the subculture, language, information level, and prejudices of the disadvantaged.

Various means of communication are available. The participants discussed the need to determine which of these are appropriate, recognizing that to do so requires a knowledge of the media habits and other behavior patterns of the disadvantaged.

Fundamentally, change requires goals. The discussion of goals dealt with several key questions. Who should be involved in goal formation? Who can set goals for another? Can an agency be set up with legislatively designed goals that will correspond to those actually held by the disadvantaged? Are the disadvantaged receptive to help in analyzing and formulating new goals for themselves? How well have the goals of advantaged members of society been formulated, and, if formulated, are they compatible with goal formation and goal attainment of the disadvantaged? For instance, it was observed that truly full employment is inflationary and is considered by economists to be neither attainable nor desirable. But if the functioning of our economy requires a "cushion" of at least 2 or 3 percent unemployed, to what goals should these unemployed aspire? (Is there any way of providing the "cushion" by virtue of persons who are only marginally in the labor force–for example, housewives, semi-retired, students–and for whose primary goals employment may not be absolutely essential?)

A common goal for most people is good health, which involves access to at least basic medical care. Is this a valid goal for families with an annual income of $3,000 or less? If so, how may this goal be reconciled with the rising costs of medical care and the goal of most citizens to pay less taxes and lower health insurance premiums?

In discussing goals, Sharp stressed the need to identify *means* by which various media and communication techniques could be employed to expand and improve the life style of the poor and disadvantaged, and improve mutual understanding between the poor and the nonpoor. He detailed several current research and demonstration projects of the Office of Economic Opportunity. These included the training of poor and minority workers as television technicians; a study of the emerging community antenna television industry (CATV) to determine if the interests of the disadvantaged could be served by it; a study of existing television programming to see how more meaningful and socially relevant material could be incorporated; and a study of television as an instrument for basic education of the functionally illiterate.

To understand and work with goal formation is more important than merely listing goals and devising programs to reach them, according to Coward and Gansemer. The goals of agency executives and workers do not necessarily (or often) correspond to those of the disadvantaged. Television (e.g., CATV) as a means of communication stresses a one-way flow of information from the bureaucracy to the disadvantaged. An even more interesting study, they suggested, would seek to ascertain what community and industry organizations would be required to give the disadvantaged effective access to CATV for enunciating their own goals–and what would be required to enable this feedback to be effectively utilized.

A major obstacle in communicating with the rural disadvantaged resides with those who wish to communicate. Lyons noted that, as we try to communicate with the disadvantaged, we need first to examine our own perspectives and eliminate paternalism. Every man has his own integrity and dignity, and it is that to which we must relate.

Lyons suggested that people be thought of as "other-advantaged," rather than "disadvantaged." Their strong qualities should be recognized. Honesty in our relations should be emphasized. The disadvantaged have been lied to and given the run-around too often in the past; effective communication requires the deliberate building of a new trust. Variants in cultural background require recognition. This is apparent in communication between Nigerians and Japanese, for instance, but is all too often ignored in dealing with various American subcultures.

Lyons stressed that, before attempting to communicate with the "other-advantaged," we must communicate with ourselves and with our peers in society, to better understand our own motives, biases, suppositions, and goals. What do we really have to communicate, and for what purpose? To what extent must the "other-advantaged" change, and in what ways must society take the initiative in altering circumstances and providing genuine opportunities?

In response, Sutherland listed five common faults in the methods typically used:

- The people to be served by a program are seldom involved in planning it–or even in saying whether it is needed.
- Too often, projects are merely demonstrations. There is a lack of continuity and follow-through, which lends an air of insincerity.
- White racism is the root cause of most problems of the poor.
- Schools must be made more responsive to the needs of the children in the community. Children must be given real opportunity and encouragement to get the best education and must not be shunted into vocational or other noncollege "tracks" because of race or home background. "Our hopes are in our children," she said.
- Many more black and Puerto Rican teachers must be recruited as models of successful professional achievement.

The *process* of communicating was analyzed by Brubaker. A source formulates the message, which is transmitted in the form of symbols through a channel to the receiver, who must then translate those symbols into ideas. Distortion or mutilation may occur at any stage and, in any form, can be considered "noise." Brubaker stressed that one should expect noise and systematically try to cope with it. One should seek and use feedback as a check on one's own efforts. One's own assumptions concerning another person or group should be examined before attempting communication. If the assumptions are invalid, the message is not likely to get through intact. Above all, dynamic communication, which involves a true meeting of the minds, requires each party to respect the other as he is, even though the purpose of the communication is to encourage the other person to change in some fundamental way.

Powers noted that difficulties and breakdowns in communication must be sought as zealously as we seek evidence of progress and success. Otherwise, we hear only good news and base actions on this distorted view. Differences in characteristics between the sender and receiver must be recognized. The tasks of the sender and receiver are reciprocal if true communication is to take place. The selection of communication channels, though important, is to be considered subsidiary to the characteristics of both the disadvantaged and the advantaged.

Class distinctions between the educated, the wage-earner, and the disadvantaged of a community and the differing cultural expectations of those in each group inhibit communication between them. Macneal noted that in her rural area these distinctions are very evident, especially among the children of the disadvantaged who face many social and educational problems in school. Political issues are often based on stereotypes held by those of one class (e.g., wage-earners) concerning those of another (e.g., disadvantaged).

Other practical obstacles to interclass communication include differing value priorities, "hopeful hearing," and institutional image. When an agency is attempting to communicate across class lines, the situation can be clouded further by communication blocks within the agency itself.

Communication in organizations usually begins at the top and filters down, with diminishing effectiveness, to the disadvantaged. A better correlation between programs and felt needs should be sought by beginning at the bottom. Witherite, an OEO Community Aide, stressed that the disadvantaged and community aides who work with them deserve feedback when they send a message up through the organization. Local paraprofessionals can also serve as an essential link between an agency and the community because they are identified with both.

Reeder, addressing himself to the characteristics of organizations, noted several factors that typically hamper good communication:

- Organizations are defensive of the status quo; seldom do they welcome suggestions from outside for change in procedures or structure.

- They are more responsive to those who pay (e.g., the legislature and the organized taxpayer) than to those whom they are intended to serve.
- They tend to seek recognition and respect and to reward stability. They seek success stories and overlook or suppress failures. They also like to be reasonably sure that their activities will result in appropriate payoffs.
- They assume that they represent their whole constituency, and resist mechanisms to make representation more truly effective (e.g., with feedback).
- They tend to add bureaucratic layers for efficiency, though the effect is to insulate upper levels from negative feedback from the client level.
- They avoid dealing with individuals and try to handle people (or cases) as members of one or another class or group.
- They emphasize action by groups, which tends to encourage compromise as a way of achieving some degree of unity. (However, some organizational principles and structures might be devised to maximize the likelihood of compromise rather than confrontation through groups specifically designed and operated to encourage two-way communication with the community.)

Eberts and John also emphasized that organizations tend to become stratified and internally compartmentalized, so that two-way communication with clients, and even within the organization itself, is inhibited. This seriously limits organizational effectiveness. These conditions can be improved, they suggested, if organizational structures are remodeled to provide self-consciously for communication with the clientele, as well as between various levels of the organization. The organization can be even more effective if it reaches out to gain participation of other groups and population segments of the larger community.

Workshop participants, Coward noted, stressed strongly that effective goal formation in relation to problems, and to programs designed to meet them, not only requires effectively operating feedback mechanisms, but also requires dealing with the *feelings* of all participants.

This brought the discussion to the question, What are the characteristics of the disadvantaged? Zurcher noted that there are many stereotype versions of "the poor." (Many traits commonly attributed to the disadvantaged as a class are found widely among advantaged people.) They must be considered as individuals. Many of their characteristics are adaptive to the circumstances they face. Actual observation of advantaged and disadvantaged working together effectively in a local poverty action board revealed many changes in the attitudes and concepts (i.e., the characteristics) of the disadvantaged as they experienced the changed situation. A systematic sampling through a questionnaire sent to representatives of both the advantaged and the disadvantaged revealed striking and consistent differences between them. That is, the disadvantaged scored lower than the advantaged in activism and achievement orientation, but higher than the advantaged in anomie, isolation, normlessness, powerlessness, alienation, and particularism.

Dobie pointed out that rural disadvantaged are found throughout the nation. They differ from region to region, but some common threads may be widely encountered. In general, mass media do not reach them—at least, not with needed information and education. Also, extension meetings, which are effective with other rural groups, do not usually work well with the disadvantaged. This failure he attributed to educational limitations and other social factors. The most effective means of reaching them is through personal contact, often with extension aides.

Barrera, who is an extension aide working among Mexican-Americans in South Texas, commented that not only are people unaware of help that is available, they often lack the needed linguistic skills to apply for it. Many do not speak English, and an aide who speaks their language and is of their own community can more readily establish rapport.

McCormack and Picou observed that, while urban poor tend to live in congested areas, the rural poor are often isolated. The geographical isolation of the rural poor tends to be aggravated by social and cultural isolation. Often they are beyond reach of municipal services such as electricity and sewage, and their remoteness hampers effective organization as well as social contacts with their peers. They tend to lack effective representation in the political system. As a result of this isolation, they feel excluded from the mainstream of society. Such nonparticipation tends to reinforce their isolation. Because they are often helpless, they tend to feel hopeless.

Participants in the Workshop did not consider that the many problems discussed were insoluble; rather, it was generally agreed that they can best be dealt with when they are brought out into the open through thoughtful and systematic analysis and discussion by people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Workshop participants tended to feel that the key to better communication lies in better use of face-to-face interaction, often involving paraprofessionals from the local level. Involvement of the disadvantaged themselves in goal formation and plans for action is essential.

Sutherland asked if this Workshop would help the poor in any way, or if it would end only as talk. This question and others led to an extended general discussion that covered methods of communication, deficient organizations, the need for more effective feedback, the shortcomings of mainstream society, the background of white rural poverty, class attitudes, the tendency to lose sight of basic needs and means to their solution, and the need to spend time formulating and analyzing goals and messages and how to communicate them to the disadvantaged.

In addition to the general discussion and analysis, a number of specific suggestions arose. They have been classified as follows:

NEEDED ACTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- A national task force of scientists should be organized. This task force should carry out a critical appraisal of the national goals and program priorities, asking themselves whether they can realistically address the problems of the disadvantaged. It should also serve as an advisory body to program administrators and political leaders of congressional committees and investigation teams on matters related to updating and restructuring agencies, services, and standing legislation.
- The public, as well as the government, must be awakened to the critical drag effects on our nation of leaving unresolved the problems that impinge on the disadvantaged segments of our society. Television and film documentaries should be encouraged that would highlight the critical widening gap between the have's and the have-not's in American society.
- The top-to-bottom model of program building is repeated over and over, in spite of its marked lack of success. Room should be made for other models that would allow the disadvantaged to evolve local programs, flexible in administration, and controlled and accountable at the local level.

NEEDED ACTION AT STATE, REGIONAL, AND COMMUNITY LEVELS

- Follow-up workshops and training conferences should be organized to develop agency, organization, and program administrators' skills in understanding and communicating with the disadvantaged. The administrators are rapidly becoming a disadvantaged group, so far as their inability to understand is concerned.
- Special training in awareness for program workers and administrators should be developed, to improve their capacity to "listen" to disadvantaged clients.
- A top-level coordinating committee should be established at the community level to focus and amplify meaningful services in relation to needs of the disadvantaged.

NEEDED ACTION AT THE INDIVIDUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, OR PROGRAM LEVEL

- Goals and objectives should be reviewed. The disadvantaged should be actively involved in contributing to the establishment of meaningful program goals and objectives. Implicit prejudice, discrimination, negative biases, and value orientations should be resolutely eliminated from program goals and objectives. Goals and objectives should have enough flexibility to accommodate differences, exceptions, and unusual situations.
- Feedback should be built in. Organizations should deliberately set up feedback mechanisms that will allow necessary intelligence information to flow past the junior level screening and get to the top, for purposes of program guidance. The bad news as well as the good news needs to be heard. Administrators of organizations should establish a rotating advisory panel from among the disadvantaged clients as a means of keeping in tune and in touch with both successes and failures.
- Organizations should be encouraged to make use of paraprofessionals as a means of bringing services closer to the disadvantaged.
- Program leaders should revise their viewpoints and observe and begin to build on the strengths of the disadvantaged.

NEEDED ACTION IN COMMUNICATIONS AND LANGUAGE TRAINING

- Special training courses should be developed in public schools and at universities dealing with the ethnic history and cultural meanings of language and other behavioral patterns of disadvantaged groups, recognizing such languages as Black English, Appalachian Mountain talk, Chicano, and Indian tribal.
- Ethnic and cultural language orientation and training should be provided for both program workers and administrators.
- Research and documentation of ethnic–cultural language forms should be developed for use in education and training programs.

Required Research

- Materials should be developed to back-stop suggested ethnic history and cultural language training for use in educational institutions and action programs.
- Alternative organizational structures should be designed for achieving feedback information about programs, including both their successes and failures.
- Experimentation and testing should be pursued in development of alternative communications technology for reaching specialized audiences for specialized purposes (e.g., cable television).
- Different models of communication with specified low income audiences should be developed and tested. This work should be pursued as a conscious part of new agency programs.
- The use of paraprofessionals as supplementary teachers in public schools and universities in relation to developing programs, insights, and understandings of disadvantaged peoples should be explored.
- Documentation is needed to determine the extent to which program failures are a function of inadequate communications.

PAPERS

ROBERT S. BRUBAKER

Nature of the Communication Process

On the early morning radio news, I heard a prominent newscaster announce: "The U.N. will start holding meetings on the Arab–Israeli problems today. This guarantees there will be talk but no action."

The same day a student in my office told me that she was unable to talk with her parents and that they needed to communicate more. This is called the generation gap. But the newscaster implied that talk does not *do* anything.

Talk has no friends; communication is today's panacea.

However, most of our communication is done through the medium of talk—not through print. Hundreds of thousands of words are coming out in print every day, but every day millions of words are spoken. If change is expected through communication, it is talk that should be studied.

Shannon and Weaver (1949) point out that, in general, the communication process requires five components: source, transmitter, channel, receiver, and destination.

The *source*, the speaker's brain, generates messages—that is, formulates the information that is to be sent. The *transmitter* codes the message in a form that is compatible with the channel. The *channel*

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carries the coded message through space. The *receiver* decodes the message into a form appropriate to the destination. The *destination* is the depository of the message—that is, the listener's brain.

The speaker's brain is a source of messages. These messages exist in his mind as nerve impulses. The impulses remain in the speaker's brain until they are coded in a shared set of symbols. The speaker's brain thus orders a learned set of muscle movements affecting organs of the chest, throat, and mouth. These movements result in a variety of patterns of air pressure in the channel. The channel is set into vibration by the movements of the speech mechanism. These vibrations set the listener's eardrums into motion. The movements of the eardrums go to the cochleae and are turned into nerve impulses for the destination.

Basically the source wants to make contact with the destination. The destination is meant to act upon the message in some way, to use the information conveyed to it or accept the belief expressed. But to span the distance between the source and the destination, the message must be transformed or changed several times.

Each transformation has its risks. These perils produce errors in the formulation and transmission of messages. The errors in message sending and receiving are generally attributed to "noise." Noise is ever present, causing misunderstanding. When we think of noise, usually, we think of the clatter of falling objects or children banging and crashing through the house. These are forms of noise, but there are other forms. Noise can intervene in each part of the communication process.

Alcohol can cause noise in the source. A speaker under the influence of alcohol is likely to be incoherent. If a speaker has a cleft palate, laryngeal cancer, or a lung disorder, he does not speak clearly. Where speech is hard to understand, we have noise in the transmitter.

The channel is being subjected to greater amounts of noise every day in our towns and cities. The transportation industries are key offenders, for the noise of cars, trucks, buses, and airplanes is increasing. Often we retreat indoors to shield ourselves from the noise. When we are no longer protected by double-paned glass and acoustic tile, we add muzak to cover up the residual noise. We are not cleaning up the rotten egg that makes the smell, we are just pouring perfume on it.

There can be noise in the receiver in the form of hearing loss. There can be noise in the destination, too. Here the noise may be a lack of understanding, an unwillingness to listen, or distractions from a headache, an empty stomach, or fright. There is noise in organizations, too: from organization to organization, from higher to lower levels in an organization, from co-worker to co-worker within a level.

How do you know if there is noise in your communications? A clue to the answer to this question can come, surprisingly, from listening to yourself.

The name for this self-monitoring is feedback. If we extend this concept, we realize that we can monitor the effects of our activity not only by listening to ourselves but also by watching the responses of our listeners. If we want to know how well our message is understood, we can observe our audience for signs of puzzlement, disagreement, or boredom.

To alleviate noise, we use redundancy. In its simplest form, redundancy consists in repeating the message verbatim. When we do not understand, we request redundancy. We say, for example, "I'm sorry, I didn't catch that," or "I beg your pardon," or "What did you say?" The multiple signs for an exit on a highway are redundant. Using both speech and a blackboard drawing is a common redundancy technique. The obvious advantage to redundancy is that it gives you an opportunity to correct errors; you can overcome noise. You gain intelligibility.

Other redundancy techniques employ restricted, simplified vocabulary. This approach is used, for instance, in air traffic control, where a misunderstanding can cost hundreds of lives and result in losses of millions of dollars. The same approach is used in writing books for children. One of the best ways to communicate without noise is to use simple words.

Color coding is effective. It requires only a minimum vocabulary and allows rapid recognition. (All the colors used in telephone wiring are there for redundancy.) Another redundancy technique is merely to reduce the rate at which information is transmitted. (This is especially helpful in dealing with older people.)

In summation, communication is an involved process in which many things can, and often do, go wrong because of noise. The message sent is seldom the message received. There is always some distortion and this introduces errors. Often we can discover what has gone wrong by noting the feedback. We can ease the situation using redundancy.

It is instructive to consider which oral communication situations are most successful. We discover that communication is optimal when the speaker and the listener have similar backgrounds, have had much the same experiences, and share similar attitudes. In short, communication works best in homogeneous groups. That is not the case when the welfare worker talks to her client. Opposites do not communicate successfully. (Although homogeneous groups can communicate most successfully, they have the least news for one another. For old friends and long-time married people, the redundancy is built in.)

When we attempt to communicate with those who do not share our attitudes, beliefs, expectations, or experiences, our efforts meet frustration; noise is maximized. Yet this is when there is the greatest need to communicate successfully, to bring about change. Failure is virtually guaranteed unless we get feedback, try to understand it, and use it to modify our message.

Attitudes also affect communication and social interaction. One assumption frequently made is that the talker and the listener are alike, or should be. For example, in the National Health Service in England, a service instituted to guarantee health care for all the people, some of the aged poor were not getting proper medical attention. It appeared that the middle-class doctors had the middle-class attitude that it is "keen to be clean and sublime to be on time." Unfortunately the aged poor were neither. When the aged poor arrived late for health care, they were told to go home and take a bath.

It is easy to imagine the reactions of the poor in these circumstances, but we can feel some sympathy for the doctors. People should be on time. We are on time and other people should be like us. That is our assumption. Others, regardless of race, color, creed, or previous condition, are just like us and *should* be like us.

There is the other side, also. How is it for them? They might go to the free clinic for treatment at 9 a.m. to stand in line to get in when the clinic opens at 10 a.m. They might get in to see the doctor at 2:30 p.m. He listens to their chest, writes a prescription, and says, "Next." No tender loving care. No explanation of what is wrong. Just "Next."

What is the pay-off for being there at 9? We have learned to be on time because it has paid off for us. But when you are poor and uneducated, it may not make any difference whether you are on time. You will lose anyway.

If you are black or Mexican or a Kallikak you cannot make it by being on time. And you cannot understand that it is important to others. You cannot understand why the welfare lady's time is divided into 15- or 30-minute chunks or why, if you are late for your

15 or 30 minutes, you do not get to see her today.

The middle class does not understand that not everyone has learned deferred gratification–that going to school 12 or 16 years is a means of getting a better job. Some poor have remained in high school but have failed to find work, or they do not have a car to drive to where the jobs are.

The middle class does not understand that not everyone can own a home. But the poor live in places that they do not own and cannot hope to own.

The middle class does not understand why the poor buy color television sets on time. But the poor do not subscribe to magazines, buy books, go to the movies, go out for dinner, or belong to clubs. If the middle class had to forgo these activities, they would probably buy color television sets too.

The middle class does not understand why the poor do not take advantage of food specials at the grocery store and prepare money-saving casseroles. My wife drives from one store to another buying this special and that special in quantities, to put in our freezer for later use. The poverty class cannot do that. They have to buy groceries at the neighborhood store on "mother's day," the 1st and 15th of the month when the welfare checks arrive. (I have heard that, in many stores, prices are raised on the 1st and 15th.)

The middle class does not understand why the poor do not respect the law. But the middle class has not had the bad experiences with the law that the poor have had. The middle class has not been evicted, has not had wages taken away, and has not been kept from driving to work because of expiration of either a car inspection sticker or a driver's license.

There will not be much change for the rural disadvantaged until someone talks to them, gets feedback from them, and uses enough redundancy to ensure that problems will become clear to both sides.

If the middle class wants change for the rural poor, here are my recommendations for communicating with them:

- Take them as they are.
- Respect them as they are.
- Do not expect that there will be immediate understanding. Expect "noise."
- Listen to what they say carefully and with compassion; make use of the feedback.

- Have the message repeated for better understanding; use redundancy.

If it is important enough to say, it is important to see that it is understood. This means that we will have to work to overcome the "noise" of our assumptions.

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PATRICIA MACNEAL

Talking with the Poor

Communication might be compared to an alternating current—not a one-way, but a two-way process, where each person's feedback is the other person's message. This is extremely important to remember when communicating with, not to, the disadvantaged.

I would like to discuss the "noise" aspect of Brubaker's communications model. In the rural Pennsylvania valley where I live, there seem to be three groups of people who have difficulty communicating with one another. These three groups are the educated, the wage-earners, and the disadvantaged.

The educated value words. Talking, listening, and reading are for them an important part of life. Although they may not have much money, articulateness gives these people a visible self-confidence.

Wage-earners tend to base their estimates of worth on money and possessions. They often do not have a university education. They value hard work, cleanliness, thrift, and other Pennsylvania Dutch virtues and may be suspicious of, and look down on, both the educated and the disadvantaged.

The disadvantaged have no sense of pride from either education or money. In our area they are cut off not only from the rest of society but even from one another. They lack telephones, cars, and drivers' licenses. In the city, contact with other slum dwellers is always possible on the street, but the rural poor, women especially, see and talk to few people outside their own families. Television gives them their view of the outside world.

Between the educated and the poor, there may be goodwill and communication. There is virtually no communication between the middle class and the poor. Yet, the middle class in the valley control many of the sources of income. They affect substantially the lives of the disadvantaged.

The successful, hard-working villager is often unaware that there are poor in the area because the poor live on the back roads and do not take part in community activities. They do not join clubs, attend meetings, serve on committees, or speak out about local government. They do not belong to the church, Scouts, or the PTA. Their children are seen in the public schools, where they serve as a source of anecdotes and gossip. In the upper grades they tend to be separated into sections designed for vocational preparation rather than college preparation.

When faced with the middle-class world, the disadvantaged are insecure, fearful, suspicious, and very aware of their vulnerability. Parents often say, "Kids have to be thick-skinned to make it through Penns Valley High." The younger children run to the far side of the room when a stranger comes. Overprotection of children is common, for the poor do not want their children sent out too soon into what they consider a hostile world. They keep 4-year-olds at home instead of letting them go to nursery school and even discourage play groups. Social retardation starts here.

For any communication between the disadvantaged and the middle class to take place, class-related values must be seen in proper perspective first. The person who says,"If they would just be grateful for what you do for them!" or "If they just were not so lazy!" cannot communicate with the poor. Even when the speaker feels he is being tactful, such feelings show on his face and sound in his voice. The poor feel unfairly judged and remain silent. (The Pennsylvania Dutch emphasis on cleanliness, thrift, and hard work makes this an especially difficult problem in our area.)

Many hard-working wage-earners seem incapable of imagining the long-term effects of poor health, fatigue, depression, and the fear of being used. They quickly draw the line between "we" and "they." The poor also draw this line with "Why don't they leave my kid alone?" and "Why are they always poking their noses into my business?"

Unwillingness to communicate on the part of the middle-class person may come partly from fear of losing social status through associating with those below him, as he sees it. The educated person feels less threatened. Instead, he may feel that he gains status in his peer group's eyes through talking with (and dreaming like) the poor.

In other words, the middle class's predisposition against, and the educated class's predisposition for, communicating with the disadvantaged stem from a fair degree of self-interest, in both cases. Recognition of this could clarify antagonisms that arise between the two classes when the topic of "welfare" is broached.

Even if sympathy and goodwill are present, communication difficulties arise. Implications may be assumed by one person and not understood by the other. I made this mistake recently. A boy needed an eye test before he could get his driver's license. I made an appointment with the optometrist, but was unable to provide transportation that day. I asked the boy's parents if they could get him there, assuming that they would ask someone to cancel the appointment if they could not. They said that they would, meaning that they knew it was up to them to drive him in. What we should have been talking about was what to do if the car would not start. Unfortunately the car did not start the morning of the appointment; the family did not think about other ways to get the young man there and did not realize that they should have called the optometrist. This made it difficult for me to reschedule the appointment and was used by some in the community as one more example of the shiftless nature of the family.

What I call "hopeful hearing" is another problem in the early stages of communication between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. A Farmers Home Administration representative expresses his feelings of goodwill and encouragement by telling a poor family that the loan for their new house or well will come through before long, "maybe in 3 or 4 weeks." This is heard as "Your loan will come through in 3 or 4 weeks." When it does not materialize this quickly, there is a feeling of betrayal, or at least a loss of trust.

If a middle-class agency representative goes into a poor home as a neighbor or friend, rather than as an official representing an organization working with the poor, he can be more effective. When the time comes that the children run to meet the new friend, holding out their arms for a hug, one knows that the barriers of suspicion and class judgment have begun to crumble. A trusting exchange of real thoughts and feelings can begin.

Age and sex differences affect communication. Volunteer social workers tend to fall into familiar family positions in a disadvantaged family. I become a spare aunt. A college sophomore volunteer tells how he can easily give directions about helping mother clean the house and do dishes to a boy younger than himself, much as an older brother could; but he cannot give such suggestions to a boy his own age or older. This seems worth further attention. In families where the elders are turned to with respect, retired persons should be able to take grandmother and grandfather roles and be particularly influential in redirecting living patterns and helping in decision-making.

The disadvantaged talk to one easily about their own problems. Any reference to one's own world is accepted without comment or is rejected. The poor are bold to talk on their own turf, hesitant on topics more familiar to their self-assured neighbors. Talking about one's own doings gives anyone confidence. A "territoriality" of subject matter seems to be involved.

Joking is a very common form of talk whenever people of the same class converse. A more exact study of when and why joking can take place between two persons of different classes might be productive in establishing what sort of talk brings about changes in actions.

Casual acceptance of a person brings about no change; to be more helpful requires a delicate balance between using tact and using frankness or honesty. If a social worker is too critical, he loses the trust that is essential for communication. If he accepts and enjoys the disadvantaged just as they are, he may be failing to help them. Someone from a disadvantaged background can probably be franker in objecting to such things as unsanitary conditions or poor diet than a middle-class volunteer.

Some disadvantaged people have an image of themselves as helpless. They feel that if they were more efficient, cleaner, healthier, or harder working, it would be a betrayal of what they really are. "If I change I won't be me any more." That's a guilt-laden, frightening possibility. The establishment of a new friendship can be one way to change this self-image slowly. It is not easy. I offered a teenage girl the chance to earn a little money by helping me houseclean. Hoping to encourage her attitude toward a neat house, I commented very truthfully as we dusted a bookcase together, "You know, I sort of enjoy dusting—making everything bright and shiny." She frowned and looked doubtful. "You sure have a lot of books," she said, implying that she did not want that many books. Behind her words was a touching loyalty to her own family and background.

There is another kind of faulty communication that is an obstacle to helping the disadvantaged. Faulty communication within agencies and between agencies often creates havoc. When the person in charge of a program has reached a decision based on directives from his superiors, should he stop listening to his subordinate staff who disagree? Yes-men, power politics, bureaucracy, and the desire to have new, flashy programs on the records, all create "noise" in the communication process.

Within an agency, insecurity can cause a staff member to make dogmatic statements; he is unable to hear what the rest of the staff is saying or to relate what was said in a previous discussion. On the other hand, a professor, usually high on the staff, is often so delighted with stating the exact, complex refinements of an idea that he does not notice that his listener does not understand. This lack of communication can go unnoticed by the person talking, and the listener feels too ignorant to mention it.

Too often the staff of one agency or department does not meet to share ideas and information with others working in the same geographical area. While the employment office looks for work for the wife, the counseling service tries to bolster the "father-oriented" family image. Enchantment with one's own bright solution for a family's problems can make one forget the need to hear other solutions and coordinate efforts.

Basically, talking with the poor is no more complex than talking with anyone else. It requires trust, openness, a willingness to listen, and the imaginative ability to put oneself in the other person's place. Fear, distrust, self-interest, or sheer unfamiliarity with the background of the other person can get in the way. Without the desire for communication, going through the motions is a waste of breath.

If talking is to change the lot of the outcasts scattered along our back roads, it must include effective, honest communication at all levels of society, not just between the disadvantaged and the advantaged, but among the advantaged themselves.

WILLIAM SHARP

Goals in Communication with the Disadvantaged

Communication is the exchange of information and opinion, that is, getting information effectively from a source that has it to persons who need it.

The use of effective communication technologies and techniques has a direct bearing on the actual and potential success of operating our society at all levels. We know that among the poor, communications are the weakest. Where there is an insufficient flow of meaningful information within and between our communities and institutions, all segments experience a degree of isolation. Segments with the least communications capabilities—the poor—suffer most.

The Office of Economic Opportunity is investigating and defining the characteristics and attitudes of the poor and disadvantaged. Current research and demonstration efforts provide knowledge to develop intelligent assistance to the poor through a variety of means, including the mass media.

What is the current state of media availability to the urban and to the rural poor? How are the media perceived and consumed? How do poor people respond to information they receive? Are written, oral, or graphic presentations most effective in delivering information to the poor and disadvantaged? Is racial or ethnic identification good, bad, or neutral? In what terms do the poor and disadvantaged actually view themselves and how do their feelings and attitudes affect their roles in society? Some studies have been made but none supply conclusive answers to a strategy that can be executed by the mass media.

We know the poor and disadvantaged are exposed to many channels of communication–television, radio; the mailman, the grocer, the neighbor. But what channels should be utilized to feed in and carry messages out that are of benefit to the poverty segments being contacted?

There is considerable evidence that the poor and disadvantaged are unaware of many social services established for their benefit. (In other instances, more are aware than can be serviced, I am told.) The federal, state, and private programs for health, education, employment, food, and other assistance go unheeded by a great majority of those whose need is the greatest, because they lack sufficient information about these programs.

The technology exists today to transmit information to and from any point by video and audio channels. The Kerner Commission (1968) reported that many disadvantaged citizens are unable to identify with or believe what they see on television because they do not think it is for them. With the advent of community antenna television (CATV) both government and private agencies are seeking means to put this new technique to the best use for the poor.

The Communication Development Division within OEO feels that many previous efforts have focused on telecommunication as a means of imparting one-way information, rather than using its facilities to establish a base of understanding through intercommunications, so vital to the resolution of problems relating to poverty.

Our goal, therefore, is to identify ways in which the various media and communication techniques may be employed to expand and improve the life style of the poor and disadvantaged and create a basis of understanding and mutual interest between the poor and nonpoor.

There are several research and demonstration projects that the Communication Development Division of OEO will initiate during the fiscal year 1971 to address these concerns. Other related projects are under consideration.

1. The Community Film Workshop Council represents a nationwide network of five workshops and two advanced training centers to train candidates from among the poor and minority groups to become television news cameramen. These technicians will bring their

special sensitivities and reactions to the news in a way not noted before, as the ranks of those who determine who and what is seen and heard on television are devoid of individuals from these disadvantaged groups.

2. A research proposal seeks to demonstrate experimental programming techniques for the neophyte industry of cable television. (Much of the data will have application to regular commercial television, as well as CATV.) Certain preliminary questions are being posed.

- Which programming characteristics are of sufficient attraction, interest, and quality to gain the attention and interest of the poor and minority disadvantaged?
- What kind of programs of interest to the poor and disadvantaged can be produced by a nonprofessional staff?
- What programming formats are effective for achieving positive action to alleviate tensions and hostility in the community?
- What length of time is required to change established viewing habits and create new ones?
- What length of time is required to capitalize on existing credibility, or to create new credibility?
- What segments of the community will be helped and how?
- What administrative structure is needed to make the cable television industry work—for the owner, for the nonpoor subscriber, and for the poor, disadvantaged subscriber?
- What methods of financing will achieve the greatest overall community participation?

3. Another demonstration project will explore whether existing television programs can be modified to broadcast more meaningful and relevant social data for the disadvantaged. Such modified programs should enable the television industry to maintain present programming strategies without significantly raising costs or suffering losses of audience and revenue.

This project will—

- Identify the kinds of instructional information that can be effectively communicated via regular television programs, e.g., variety shows, game shows, and movies.
- Test the effectiveness of television programs as a means of reshaping attitudes, destroying myths and misconceptions concerning the poor and minority disadvantaged.

- Document audience responses to these programs, both among poor and nonpoor communities.

4. A research and demonstration project to test television as an effective teaching medium for the functionally illiterate and disadvantaged is urgently needed.

Educators estimate that anywhere from 7 million to as many as half of the adults in this country are functionally illiterate. In some instances, the educational facilities were not available. In others, the illiterate persons did not avail themselves of the facilities that were available. Regardless of the reason, many of these people are too embarrassed to admit they are unable to read or write.

Many functional illiterates cannot read well enough to comprehend newspapers or job application forms. This makes finding a job difficult and accepting public assistance easy. It can also limit their ability to make wise use of the welfare funds they receive.

Those who qualify as functional illiterates are often isolated, alienated, ignored, and especially vulnerable to discrimination. The lack of effective communication with them has adverse effects on every aspect of their social and economic life. Their lot has adverse effects on the nonpoor community as well.

At present, the adult education system does not adequately serve the needs of adults to become fully effective participants in society. This is because most adult education programs are equivalent to the grade-school level.

These are a few of the many possible areas that could be observed in attempting to put together the many separated factions of our society today. There is a vital need to establish an effective and thorough means of communication whereby the poor and minority disadvantaged can present their needs and priorities to the established institutions of the country.

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GRAYCE WITHERITE

Difficulties Faced in Achieving the Goals

Directives begin at the top. I think that they should begin at the bottom, with the disadvantaged. Since I am in a position where I am to help the disadvantaged, I feel that I must understand their needs, report back to OEO and say, "This is what we need." In some instances this has been successful, but in many it has not.

I find that more and more often, the communications breakdown is from the top. I have been in this job (Community Aide, Centre County, Pennsylvania) over 4 years and I feel I have made a lot of progress with the disadvantaged people in my area. I have earned their trust. I have learned to understand them on their level. I understand their needs and the things they want, not the things I want for them.

When I go back to the office and tell them that this is what we need, I am told that "You can't have that." When I ask why, they say, "Just don't ask, you just can't have it." I have enough German in me to keep asking "Why not?" If I can serve these people, I want to do it to the best of my ability. When my hands are tied, I do not feel I can carry out my job.

Let me give you an example of a breakdown in communication. Our director is in Clearfield, 67 miles away. One Thursday morning we got a call from Clearfield, and the boss said, "Come right away. We have a real good program coming." So we all jumped into our cars and drove to Clearfield.

My boss said Washington just called and said they had a certain sum of money and if we came up with a good plan we could have it. But there was a catch in it. He said, "You have to have a proposal in by Monday because it has to be in Washington by Wednesday." My supervisor said, "It can't be done."

Ever since I came into this organization, I wanted a well-baby clinic in my area. Our people have to travel over mountains to get child health care. So I said, "Let's see what we can do."

As soon as we returned home we called the doctors out of their offices, business people away from their businesses, and teachers away from their schools to have a meeting immediately. Also, we asked the Penns Valley Area Medical and Health Association if they would go along with us. We asked them that if we could get money from the government to set up a temporary clinic until ours was built, would they go along with it. They were tickled to death because we have one physician for 9,000 people.

A committee was set up from that group and we worked for two nights on a proposal. I even took one of the ministers along to the office to hand the proposal to the big boss. He looked it over and said it was very good and that we really should get the money for this.

In the meantime, all this buzzing went on in our little community. Maybe now we would get the health center. We really had our hopes up. Weeks went by. Then we got a rush call; come to Clearfield right away. So we went over there hopefully, thinking that this was the answer to our clinic. We got there and the meeting went on and on but still no magic word, "yes."

Finally I pounded on the table and said, "Stop keeping me in suspense. Tell me, did we get the money for the clinic or didn't we?" "No!" and he proceeded to explain. I said, "Back up. I want to know why we didn't get the money. You said if we had a good proposal, we'd get the money. We gave you a good proposal, why didn't Washington accept it?" "Well," I was told, "it's like this, Grayce. You can have all the money you want for planning but you can't spend any of it on equipment." I said, "OK, that's fine. I'll send you a bill for my doctors, my teachers, my businessmen, the townspeople of the community for the time they spent working on this. You send them a check for the money. What we do with that money is our business.

If we want to put it into a kitty for our clinic we will do it." I was told "No, you can't do that." I said, "What is planning if it isn't that?" "Well, we don't have time to talk about it."

I was so mad I cried. I said, "Don't ever come to me again with another proposition until you have the money in your fist. Then I'll work up a program." He said, "That isn't the attitude to take." Maybe it isn't but I told him the government can keep its money and we'll get our own clinic, and we did. But that is one example of a breakdown in communications from the top.

I feel that I deserve some feedback the same as they deserve some feedback. They say do this, and I do it. They want to know about it, and I tell them. But when I ask for something and hand it over to them, I expect something back from them, not a lot of legal jargon. That is one of the gaps we have in our communications.

When I started working with the disadvantaged 4 years ago, one of the first things I learned was that if I was going to be able to help these people, I had to understand them. I would have to earn their trust because they are a loner group. They stay in their own little shell around their own family and this is all they have in their lives.

It took me about a year for them to trust me. They would come to me with their problems and I would try to help them solve them. As a community aide, I am not supposed to do things for them; rather, I am to help them do things for themselves. In this way, they have a sense of achievement. So when they do it for themselves it is like handing them a million bucks. I feel it is very important in communications to establish trust. As Ron Powers said in our work group, "Sometimes it is more important to be a receiver than a sender."

This came to mind as I went into homes where they didn't know me very well and where they weren't very responsive or receptive. I would pick out some item in their home they were really proud of. Maybe it was just a picture of grandma or some flowers in the window. Then I started talking and they would pour it out. It is important, if we expect to help the disadvantaged, to learn to talk to them. When we bring them to meetings to hear speakers, the speakers should speak in a language that these people can understand.

Most of these people, for example, do not have much of an education. When I did a survey, I learned that about 80 percent of my disadvantaged people had nothing but a fifth grade education. Some had none at all. There are even quite a few retarded homemakers and retarded children, just as every other area has. I think it is important, when you are speaking to these people, to come down to a level they can understand and talk to them on this level. If you do, you will be able to communicate much, much better.

I work with the Volunteer Service Center at the University; they are my right arm. When I can't get enough people in the community to help me, they send students down to help me. Sometimes there is a breakdown in communications with them and we have misunderstandings and foul-ups. These can result in tensions and anxieties and everything else that goes with it.

But I'd like to give you an example of good communications between the educated and the disadvantaged. The volunteers do nice things for the disadvantaged kids and the older people. They get along well together. One group of five volunteers went to the home of a retarded homemaker to help her. We started by painting her kitchen and then we painted her living room. She helped the best she could. I said to these kids, "See how much these people like to be around you." The volunteers felt the same way and wanted to know if there was some way they could help her more. Not just one day a month or twice a year. I said, "Yes, there is."

Generally, being retarded, she doesn't know how to cook, prepare meals, buy groceries, or a lot of little things. So now this group goes out to her home three times a week to help her prepare meals. They take her to the grocery store and show her which are the best buys and how to plan meals. In this way the children of this family are getting better food to eat, and they, too, are beginning to help their mother a little.

I'll give you another example. One of the students reported to me in early summer that they visited Jenny and noticed that her baby, who was a year old in October, had not begun to crawl because it was placed in the crib all the time. One of the students said to Jenny, "Why don't you put the baby on the floor so it can learn to crawl?" Jenny's response was that it is cold on the floor. The student said, "How about putting the blanket on the floor?" Jenny didn't say anything for a long time. She walked around and then said, "I think I'll put a blanket on the floor so the baby won't get cold when it crawls around." So she thought she had thought it all up herself. The kids thought she was great and they told her so. This built her up, and now she can't wait until these kids come to see her.

Communications break down among others, too, among organizations such as PARC–the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children–and Child's Welfare. We had some problems in communicating with them, but now things are working better. We feed back to them what they want to know and they do the same. With cooperation from other agencies, it makes the work twice as easy.

I face another problem in this job with the local wage earner. I live in a small community and we have a little grocery store. The man who runs it is the busiest, funniest man I have ever seen. He knows everybody's business. Right across from him there is a family (there were seven, now six). The mother is retarded and they live in a little 35-foot trailer. The baby died last week.

The storekeeper said one day, "Say, Mrs. Witherite, are they going to take those kids away from that home over there?" I said, "Not that I know of. Why?" He replied, "Well, they are so filthy dirty. Somebody ought to take those kids away from there. Can you imagine living like that?" I said, "Can you? Put yourself in their place. You live in that trailer with six kids and no running water. Sleeping quarters are bad and the eating table is only half as big as your counter. How do you think you would look? Why should they take the children away from her?"

He said, "Well, they are dirty. I think something should be done about it." I said, "Yes, and things ought to be done about other things in this community." So after a while, after we heard that the baby died, he came to me and said, "Isn't there some way we can help that family? Don't they need something?" I said, "Yes, they need reassurance that you aren't going to cut them off because of the grocery bill and you are going to give them another week to get it paid. That's how you can help them." Sometimes you have to forget tact and use plain language.

They are going to start a new program in our area. It's called Meals on Wheels, an emergency food program. I think it is a very good program, but I don't think it is necessary to start in my area. We have had several meetings about it.

My center is well established now—we have worked 3 hard years on it. I don't feel it should be torn up to be made into a temporary restaurant. "If it doesn't work, then some other place that wants it can have it." This is the way it was put to me, and I don't like to do my job that way. I've encouraged them to work with the churches or other organizations for this program.

I want my well-baby clinic in that center. This is what I have worked for and this is what we need. We have three restaurants and only one doctor. I think we need the medical service more than another restaurant. When I asked why it should be in my area they said, "Don't ask questions. The boss says it is going to be there and there it's going to be." I still say "Why?" In the Howard area, about 50 miles from us, there is a minister who has a day-care center and is willing to open up the church for the emergency food program. He even has the drivers to deliver the meals to the bedridden. I said, "Put it in his area; he wants it. Maybe the churches in my area will take a hint and ask for the program." The boss said, "It's going to be in the center and that's where it's going to be."

Talk about breakdown in communications! If this isn't it, I don't know what is.

RALPH L. REEDER

Some Characteristics of Organizations That Affect Two-Way Communication

Writing this paper has been a traumatic experience, because the finger that I had intended to point at organizations keeps somehow pointing back at me. Those of us who have been organization people all our working lives are well aware of the lack of two-way communication within our organizations. We have lamented it and resented it, yet as individuals we have not changed it. Particularly, I hold myself to blame because all these years I have been an information specialist, sending information down the line to an almost unknown audience and yet preparing no system for getting back the knowledge that would give me audience understanding.

The organizations related to this Workshop are of many kinds, yet they share a common bond. They were formed by people to help fill a need in other people. Some of them were formed to maintain an established situation or institution; some have been formed to change an established situation (Babchuck and Edwards, 1965). The former are, by their nature, destined to be permanent groups unless they fail in their job of maintenance. The latter are assumed to self-destruct if they succeed in making changes. However, groups formed to change a situation tend to remain and become the maintenance force to protect their new establishment. (At universities it is legendary that, next to a temporary building, there is nothing as long standing as an *ad hoc* committee.) If changes are to come, they must come from new groups and a new change cycle.

What are some of the characteristics of organizations that tend to make communication a one-way system?

ORGANIZATIONS ARE DEFENSIVE

Organizations tend to maintain the status quo because change is expensive in terms of resources; it is troublesome and often dangerous to the organization and to its leaders. Individuals who may have succeeded in gaining control of a problem situation want to be given time to see if their ways work, and thus organizations, old or new, tend to be defensive.

Some of my evidence for this came from a new model cities board that had taken office after neighborhood elections. These people openly resented the old ways of "the establishment." (Yet how quickly they adopted its forms.)

One day I was standing in the outer lobby of a model cities building waiting to talk to the director when a man walked in carrying a bundle of placards. "What shall I do with these?" he asked me. "What are they?" I asked, suddenly becoming an administrator. "Bumper stickers," he said. And they were. Bumper stickers in bright orange and black proclaiming, "I Support Model Cities."

He argued with me that model cities needed promotion and that his firm was in the promotion business. It was useless to tell him that no one who lived in the area would think of having one on his car, or that those outside the area would not understand why they should. A few appeared on employee cars, which led to the suggestion that they be reprinted to read: "Model Cities Supports Me."

This was the traditional public relations syndrome at work in a new organization with new people in seats of power following ancient one-way communication customs. It was not long until the board had layered its organization with subofficials, who could keep customers at arm's length from management. Those who had been dissenters had little patience with new ideas about improving the customer service—now they were absorbed by the job of keeping the organization looking good.

ORGANIZATIONS PLEASE THEIR FINANCIERS

Organization preoccupation with image points up a second characteristic that hinders two-way communication. Many organizations are supported by money that comes from individuals who are not the clients (Stanton, 1970). To maintain the organization, it is important to keep selling itself to those who pay. As a corollary, it is not as important to have a system for listening to the clients as it is to be able to keep their complaints from being overheard.

This is not unusual conduct. As employees we hope that our customers will say nothing but good about us to our employers. Perhaps we should forgive organizations as we forgive ourselves by saying that they, too, are only human.

ORGANIZATIONS HAVE HUMAN NEEDS

Because organizations are made up of human beings, they have human needs, which is a third characteristic that hinders two-way communication. They need, or the people who direct them need, such things as affection, recognition, meaning, and rewarded stability (Etzioni, 1968). Considering these needs, it is quite natural that leaders who have been elevated to positions of power should feel that they can speak and act for all persons in the organization. Not many of us remember, once we have been elected or selected for a leader role, that our choice was probably by a narrow vote and that perhaps nearly half of those who voted were against us.

Such is our human arrogance that we forget a basic law of communication experience. Whether we are administrators, subordinates, or clients, we expect our messages to be received exactly as they are sent. We want message A to be received as message A, and we are alarmed if some feedback reports that message A became AB to someone and ABC to someone else (Thayer, 1968). Rather than be upset by an inefficient one-way communication system, we feel better not to have feedback and there are plenty of people willing to help us be uninformed.

In fact, it is not an oversight that the list of human needs fails to mention any desire for getting bad news. One of my administrators once aspired to high government office and asked me how his chances were. In an outburst of honesty, I replied that he had little chance and gave my reasons for the opinion. After he failed to get beyond the primary, you might have expected him to revere me as an astute political pundit. Not so. Mistaking the medium for the message, he acted as if I were somehow to blame for his catastrophe. Indeed, employees in most organizations who are the bearers of bad news must prepare to make some sacrifice. Few are willing or able more than once to enjoy this luxury.

Those who are permitted to surround a leader are usually those who share his views of reality. He is shielded from outside dissonance as a football quarterback is protected by a defensive pocket. House organs and newsletters that go from employer to employee or customer are carriers of success stories almost exclusively. Field men soon learn that their supervisors give and get rewards for the quantity of success they report. Quickly they convince themselves that it is humane to keep administrators cheerful and negatively uninformed.

An example of this good-news-only pattern has been blamed at times for the defeat of such things as school bonds. Taxpayers and PTA's are accustomed to years of public information saying that their school is among the top in the state. Then suddenly the newspapers and television stations, when a bond campaign is imminent, report that school facilities are woefully inadequate; staff and program are not sufficient to be state accredited. Constituents are scarcely prepared for such rapid deterioration of their school. In their confusion they vote "No."

The reasons are explainable on human grounds. As groups or individuals, we are geared to handle appreciation better than complaints. We dislike setting up two-way machinery because it would carry messages of censure as easily up the line as down. We fear we might not be able to cut them off when they threaten our group. One of the Canadian leaders of a program for disadvantaged people told me that he was careful what he taught paraprofessionals lest they learn too much and try to take over the program.

ORGANIZATIONS ASSUME REPRESENTATION

Usually leaders in organizations come from people who have been successful in one venture and so are assumed to have leadership qualities that can be transferred to other situations. When we look for leaders, we say that to do a job in community group work we need only to call on "the man who is already busy."

Such a selection system helps the people chosen assume, and the rest of us assume, that the leader will make decisions for his subordinates and that he will represent those *for* him, as well as those against him. Even to state it here makes it seem a naive assumption, yet most of our organizations in this high-trust society (Pfaff, 1970) operate as if it were irrefutable.

New leaders called into human-improvement work often come from production-oriented businesses where they have been accustomed to extremely authoritarian structures. Students of management have been asking why it is, in a high-trust society, that so many business leaders use a system that denies trust of subordinates. Their question is based on studies that show higher profits and better products come from systems of high participation by employees (Likert, 1967). Leaders who do not trust two-way communication in a product-oriented organization, and transfer that distrust to organizations concerned with social improvement, multiply the problems.

Not only do the leaders presume representation. Teachers of leadership methods make this assumption. Most important of all, the constituents, the rank and file of the organization, permit the illusion to persist because they are a disorganized or unorganized number of individuals.

Occasionally there are breakdowns in this illusion. Some county supervisors and town council members illustrated this at a planning and zoning meeting in central Iowa. A state official had come to the meeting, had made his plea for county-wide planning, then asked for a vote. To his surprise and mine, he got "yes" from only the three communities already with zoning. The others, when questioned, explained frankly that they did not know how their constituents would want them to vote on the issue. I interviewed the nonvoters and found that they had no communication system except that of random conversation or reading the local newspaper. When I interviewed the local editors, I found that they rarely received more than a few letters on any issue. When I interviewed the citizens on various issues, I found that they did not feel they had been represented by anyone because they had never been asked for their opinion. That is why I list as a fourth characteristic that organizations assume representation through lack of communication.

The rest of us support this charade, which is a comfortable one, as long as our "representatives" do not make a decision on a fundamental issue that cuts across our value system. Then we rise in sudden concern and want to "throw the rascals out," much to the surprise of leadership. Often our lack of knowledge about the situation comes from our human reluctance to accept bad news. We resent the mass media bringing somber reports, yet when a major evil seems to come quickly, we say we were not kept informed.

Here again the finger points both ways. The leader complains that he does not know how to vote, but he has set up no communication system for receiving anything but good news. The constituents say they have not been told the truth when they set up no system for listening.

An administrator of mine once told me of a conversation with his superior about a new program under consideration. "I wish you hadn't asked me about this," the superior said. "When I feel you are uncertain enough about something to have to ask, I suspect it enough to turn it down." As advertising men say, you can afford to be wrong, but you cannot afford to be indecisive.

ORGANIZATIONS LAYER A BUREAUCRACY

As thus far discussed, it would seem organizations beg for lack of communication, for the comfort of not knowing more than they can handle. Yet, it is this desire for peaceful ignorance that leads organizations toward increasing bureaucracy. This fifth characteristic encourages the most efficient communication block of all. In an effort to avoid making decisions on insufficient evidence, leaders choose to layer themselves increasingly away from their customers. As personnel become more specialized, they force clientele into rigid categories, which leads to deterioration of professional talent. We do not normally list this under organization costs, but it is perhaps the highest cost of all: the liquidation of human assets (Likert, 1967).

We justify or permit the justification of added layers of petty officials in the name of efficiency, and we delude ourselves into believing we have improved communication, that these blocks are channels. But we are referring only to information going down. Such systems increase the quantity of one-way communication, and each bureaucratic layer of people assumes a major role in stopping information that would deliver bad news up to management. Some of this bad news is in the form of human beings in trouble, e.g., those who must wait long hours, fill out forms, consult with yet one more subordinate, until the initial problem becomes simpler than its solution (Benson, 1967).

ORGANIZATIONS AVOID THE INDIVIDUAL

By such means the organization is denying one of our fondest beliefs, that the individual in our society is supreme. Organizations feel they must, in the name of efficiency and personal sanity, try to sidetrack the individual with his pet peeve or his pet project. None of us, if our jobs are important to us, wants to be delayed by the time and patience demanded by two-way communication. A nutrition aide was close to tears as she told me that she had wasted two whole days listening to people's troubles, when none of them turned out to be about food. How do you explain to a production supervisor that you took off a day to listen to another's grief?

The administrator who boasts that his door is always open is usually the one who instructs his secretary to ask who is calling–in the name of office efficiency, of course. When an undesirable individual comes instead of calling, the back door is open for the administrator as he disappears for an important meeting.

Having listened to both sides, I have sympathy for both. The organization is supposed to show results for those who pay the bill. The businessman who wonders how he can stay in business another year has little patience with the tantrum the customer throws about a short in his electric corn popper. Yet as customers, we are impatient for individual and immediate attention. If I have a hysterical wife at home with a sick child, I am going to become angry at the doctor or welfare worker who insists I come during office hours.

Yet, I am suspect if I react with violence, or if I write harsh letters to the newspaper about my personal trouble. If I stage a one-person vendetta, I alienate my friends and do not make much of an impact on the organization.

ORGANIZATIONS CAN COMPROMISE

All of us have had our turns at "fighting city hall" or at jousting with windmills, even as did Don Quixote. Any individual can be forgiven for wanting idealistically to "straighten someone out." When we try, however, we should be aware that organizations usually have no provision for satisfactory communication with an individual in this computer age. If we still persist, knowing this, we are as insensitive to two-way communication as are the organization personnel who annoy us. Such a situation would indicate that among our most needed educational programs, not only for leaders but for constituents, are some in communications and social action related to these times and to our day-to-day problems. Such teaching needs to warn us that when an individual sets out to eliminate injustice single-handedly, he may be out of harmony with the crowded society to which he must adjust. Education today ought to help me concern myself with ways of solving my own problems by adjusting them to the larger problems of the group.

This calls for compromise, which I would like to name as a seventh characteristic of organizations because two-way communication usually demands compromise from both the sender and the receiver. In fact, listening to others is a form of compromise with self.

If I have an angry message to get across and take it first to a sympathetic group, the chances are that I will modify my message to make it more acceptable to others. Organized groups have the capability of helping me improve my message because other people in the group, possibly with less at stake, have knowledge I do not have. Such knowledge has an exchange value, and it is easier for a group of people to learn together than for its members to learn individually. Equally important, it is easier for a group to unlearn something together, and to identify individual bias (Etzioni, 1968).

An organized group not only can help its own members, but it has the ability to meet on an equal basis with other organized groups for understanding and compromise. The two-way communication involved here would not be an in-group and an out-group confronting each other, attempting to gain public attention by shouting. When I have been a part of such exchanges, I have never been able to find any communication taking place in either direction. However, I did find an example of compromise and communication taking place at a neighborhood meeting of a group of mothers and a group of policemen. It was only a week after I had heard the women angrily denouncing police callousness and lack of interest. The police questioned that anything could be gained because of the deep feeling.

Then I watched as the two groups agreed to meet—the same women, the same policemen. They sat together equally around a table, and they talked about a common problem of the neighborhood. Their respect for each other as individuals grew because they lost their group identities in the problem of neighborhood children. Here I began to see that two groups, far apart at the beginning, were being merged into one as they faced together a common problem. The police heard things they had not listened to before. Mothers, who had been cursing the police a week earlier, now stood to exhort their neighbors to help the police do their job by accepting some of the responsibility. In the problems of neighborhood youngsters these groups had found an overlapping interest for two-way communication. It fits with what some of the sociologists have been saying, that an overlapping interest is a necessity for communication between groups, including management and labor (Likert, 1967).

This is compromise. Organizations have a special capability to help people communicate beyond what could be done between an organization and an individual. But communication has to have a primary purpose, and the members must want to participate by listening as well as by talking.

"Ultimately," writes Etzioni (1968), "there is no way for a societal structure to discover the members' needs and adapt to them without the participation of the members in shaping and reshaping the structure."

As we have studied the situation in the field through the years, a group of us has come to suspect that the best solution to participation is to organize temporary interest groups around a problem. As our society grows more complex, its members have such widely scattered interests and needs that they could go in many directions as individuals, perhaps never finding a sympathetic group of people. But if they could organize for compromise, not for confrontation, and focus together on a particular problem of high priority to all, then they might communicate with each other by way of overlapping interests. Bennis (1969) suggests that we may have reached a point in this country when organizations will be established on a temporary basis to solve problems.

Our experiences in the field would make us agree with him. We propose to try to improve two-way communication and get participation through membership in a temporary, problem-oriented, organized group of people. Of course, every community has its action groups, but usually these are "campaigners," people who favor a particular solution to a problem and want to sell their idea to others. We would like to try giving this a new twist by asking that all interested groups be represented, regardless of their point of view. Each member of our problem group would represent a different interested group. Also represented would be the mass media, not as publicists but as participants (Reeder, 1970).

Our purpose for the group would be that it act as a communication system to deliver messages from people with problems to the resources that might deal with the problems, then to deliver messages back from the resources to the people. Each member would participate by bringing messages from his own group, as well as by carrying messages back to his group. We would invite mass media representation so that someone could speak for as well as to the general public. This would be necessary because a majority of readers and listeners would not be members of interest groups and they should have the chance to participate, either by joining groups or by using the mass media as a voice.

You may think us unrealistic in expecting that personnel of the mass media and members of new problem groups would be able to become two-way communicators within a system. Getting them ready to respond may require more education and motivation than we are prepared to give from present knowledge. Yet, it would be well worth an intensive effort if we could in this way deliver messages about audience problems to resource institutions that could respond. The citizen would benefit by having his problem considered, and the resource institutions would gain from the knowledge of the problem that would fit their resources.

My hope would be that groups such as this one meeting here might consider as one of its alternatives for discussion the encouragement of two-way communication systems in communities.

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BARTELL LANE
SANDY GROH
HAZEL DeLANCEY

What Our Experiences Reveal

MR. BARTELL LANE

As a black man, my experiences with different organizations have led me to believe that if we can get some understanding among ourselves in the community, we can have good communications. The farm extension and home agents have been a great help to me as a farmer. The soil conservation people have helped me somewhat, but I haven't been getting as many services from them as I thought I should have. At the time that I started to farm, the farm wouldn't produce very much. After getting help from Extension and Soil Conservation people, we were able to have one of the better farms in the county.

We have experienced race problems in my part of North Carolina. I think church groups have helped to bring about understanding. I remember one time we had a little church in my community with a pot-bellied stove. I asked the people if we couldn't help fix it up. The people in that community had very little training or money. They said it couldn't be done, that we couldn't get that much money. I said if we can get together may be we can do it. So we did and we were successful.

Another incident in my life comes to mind. I was very small. I remember once when I was going to school I was so very cold my fingers were almost frozen. I went to my father and said, "Why do I have to go right through a school yard of a well equipped school that has good paint and a janitor and travel four miles beyond to a school that has no lights and no conveniences? When we get there we have to make a fire." He tried to explain it to me but I never could understand it.

Another of my experiences also happened in a school. This happened in a community that had a high school with 1,100 students. The principal asked parents to come to the PTA. So I did. When I arrived, there wasn't a single other parent, not a single one. When I asked him where they were he said the parents just create confusion. So I said, "Let's organize so we can communicate with each other and have an understanding." He said to me, "You don't understand. You go back to that farm and stay there. I'll run the school."

I took the opportunity to go see the superintendent. The superintendent told me he hired that man, and he was going to support the principal. I said, "Well, you don't have the necessary equipment down there to run the school. There is no water, no electricity, and I didn't see but two or three test tubes there. We're going to have to change that." He said, "You can't change it." I said, "Maybe we can."

I went back to the principal again. He again told me it was the school law. So I organized a group of 300 parents and we started to try to communicate with the superintendent. We never could get through to him.

We had one last resource. The white high school was about a mile down the road. I told the superintendent, "In the fall, when the school opens, we are going to block the highway with parents and I'll be in front—I'll be the first one you'll have to shoot. If you let that principal stay down there and don't give him the necessary equipment, that's what is going to happen." They met that night and they changed their rules. We got our school. We have one of the most advanced schools in the county now. We have a good system and our communication. as far as race is concerned, is getting better and better all the time.

On another occasion the problem was with the federal government. I started farming and producing too much cotton. I had one of the most successful cotton crops in that section. When the adjuster came to my house, he said, "We want to plow up some of your cotton. We have three or four different rates." I said, "Which rate are you going to give me?" He said, "I can't give you but the lowest one—I am going to give you the lowest rate." The cotton he wanted to plow up produced close to two bales to the acre. I said, "It's the best cotton in the county." We said, "I know but you can't get but the lowest rate." I said, "OK, plow it up." He went next door and paid that man the highest rate the government could offer for cotton that wasn't a third of what mine was.

In another case, I participated in a state fair. Black folks had never been in competition against the whites. But this particular time they asked me to participate. I said no; I wasn't going up there and bother with those people, because we wouldn't get fair treatment. We wouldn't have good communication with each other. They said, "Well, we might try." No black person had ever been in the top ten.

That particular year we took the opportunity to participate in the fair and we got in the top six. When the judges got together they had a falling out. They took my stand and put it off on the side. They only had ten ribbons so they took my two out. They said, "We have to make you a special award, being in the top six, but you can't count in the top ten ribbons." We didn't have a good understanding, so we didn't get anywhere that year.

The next year, I came in the top four. On my stand I had 52 products that were raised on my farm. They pulled it out again so that the stand could not compete with the others.

But since then we have worked through that problem. I have been asked to work with them, and we are getting good communication with the Extension and Soil Conservation people. I think we are getting along better, because understanding is better and communication is better.

MISS SANDY GROH

When I was in grade school, on the Crow Indian reservation, there were two first grades. In spite of the problem of the Crow-speaking Indian children being unable to communicate with the English-speaking children, it was necessary to equalize the level of learning as much as possible for further education. The introduction of Project Head Start has, to an extent, lessened the need to separate the children. Also, a larger percentage of the parents of the younger generation speak English (as well as their native language) in the home. With the increasing use of English in the homes, children who might have benefited from another year in first grade are able to be promoted. Sometimes the school authorities decide that the child would probably not learn more the second time because of the cultural disparities.

When I was in school, the children, after completion of the seventh grade, were bused 12 miles to Hardin, a small, predominantly non-Indian town, to finish their education through high school. The children who lived in Hardin conveyed to the Indian children the feeling that we were unacceptable socially. In addition, the problem of transportation after school contributed to our social nonparticipation. Some children were prevented from developing their individual assets by a feeling of inadequacy. They dropped out of school and lived among their own people on the reservation. Many Indians, upon finding difficulty in entering non-Indian culture, retreated permanently into the more familiar Indian culture.

This feeling of inadequacy can develop into a persecution complex. This may be an underlying trait among all Indian people, deterring interaction with non-Indian people. Another problem that contributes to the communication gap between the Indian and non-Indian people is the stereotype of the Indians as worthless drunks—in our case due to the proximity of Hardin, the only liquor source, and to the visible habitual drinkers who frequent the bars.

The Indian's emotions, most of which are suppressed in the Indian culture, are communicated nonverbally. This is often misunderstood, and indeed verbal people are often unaware of it. This verbal versus nonverbal communication between cultures creates a gap in understanding and, therefore, in communication.

An example of this communication gap can be shown by an observation I made while working at a girls' home. A Ute Indian girl was sent to this home at the age of fifteen, after having lived only among her people on the reservation and having attended only all-Indian schools. She was the only Indian among 40 girls. Her adjustment was not entirely satisfactory because of her limited experience outside her culture. She had a difficult time adjusting to group living, although she had some individual friends. She could not understand what her counselors meant by "feelings," as she could not express her feelings verbally. This was a double problem, since her counselors did not understand that her silence and "I-don't-know" answers to their questions were because of her misunderstanding and uncertainty of their expectations, as well as her lack of verbal expression.

Because of this communication gap, the Indian people tend to form strong feelings of kinship among themselves. It seems that everyone on the reservation is related to everyone else, and, unlike other cultures, there is very little distinction between a first and a fourth cousin.

MRS. HAZEL DeLANCEY

Communication is like the game of gossip we used to play. By the time the story got to the end of the line, it wasn't like it started. Another example is crack the whip. The person at the end of the line gets the full shock but the shock never gets back to the lead person. He doesn't get the vibrations.

In my work as a nutrition aide, we get very extensive training from a home economist. We'll never be as good as she, but we are getting a great deal of nutrition information. When we do have an opportunity to use it, we have it. Of course, the people we work with are not receptive to all the big terms so we try to keep it simple for them. Still, if they ask questions, we have enough information to give them an answer that hopefully they can understand.

We talk about group meetings. In the rural areas and in small towns, we don't have groups. We have isolated individuals. Families live in old houses between new houses. The people in new houses are not very happy about them being there, because they degrade the property. It's always a problem to get these isolated individuals together in any group. It takes a lot of patience, and sometimes it can't be done.

Mothers' groups have stayed together and been effective in some communities, after the Head Start Program was over. I really like the idea of a meeting ground for the middle class, the educated, and the poor. When we first started a pilot program in Iowa with a sewing group, we advertised that we were going to have sewing classes at the neighborhood center. The audience we got at that time was too much middle class. I wasn't very happy at first, because I said we weren't reaching the people we were supposed to be reaching. But these were the people who came.

One thing we want to remember, and I wonder if we do, is that these people we are trying to reach cannot read well; at least not like you or I. I don't read as you do and I don't talk as you talk. Sometimes I have heard words here I have not understood. I am sure I have used words with my clients that they have not understood.

I have to be careful with the words I use with these people. I sometimes use words too big for them to understand.

I think it would help if children read better–if they read just for information. The reading person is on the road to some degree of self-improvement. If you can get a person to read the right kind of thing, something besides the funny papers, they are going to want some kind of self-improvement.

When we prepare printed material, we have to interpret this material to them. Sometimes we need to read it with them and point out the main points. We talk about reading readiness of the kindergarten students; in our teaching group, I think the mother must be gotten ready. I have not found any cut-and-dried way of getting her ready. I think the best help is just being a friend. This is the first thing we try to do.

We have a button identifying us as coming from the Extension Department of Iowa State University. And though Extension does not mean a thing to these people–they have never heard of the Extension Department of Iowa State University–when we go into a home, this button is our introduction. It is big, and it clearly identifies who we are and what we represent. We also emphasize that we are not connected with welfare. This is their first thought. This button helps us to establish the fact that we are not.

We do work with some simple aids. One of them is a chart showing the four basic food groups. Since the mothers do not read very well, I revert to kindergarten tactics. I use my fingers. The index finger represents the milk finger and is number one; the meat products are number two (middle finger); the vegetable and fruits are number three (ring finger); and the cereals and bread are number four (small finger). Then I say, "You check with your fingers. Do I have milk in the meal, do I have protein, and so on?" Then if we can get across to them how many servings of each one is needed, this can be like a telephone number. We have a little game for that too, e.g., for adults two servings of milk, two servings of meat, four servings of fruit and vegetables, and four servings of cereal–2244. We all remember telephone numbers. This makes it very simple.

Again I would like to emphasize–and we have talked about redundancy–always be a friend. Listen to them; visit with them. Don't just go in and say, "Now I am going to teach you about nutrition."

The part of our work we like least are the reports. It's so nice to visit, but then it has to be written up. We are told to do it as soon as possible after the visit, but often there is a delay. When we do it at home we lose the good feeling of the visit. The sooner it gets on paper the better. Sometimes we just report that we visited and that isn't very impressive in the file. One lady felt really frustrated because she had spent the whole 2 hours just visiting and hadn't gotten in anything on nutrition. But the next time she goes, the client's problems will be different; maybe her husband will have left the house in good humor, and she will not be upset. That day you can teach nutrition to her. It is because of the ground work you did that you ultimately can teach better ways with food.

In our reports there are two terms we can use: We can put HV for home visit or WV for working visit. On a working visit, we cook something. We generally plan ahead what we are going to cook. We hand out our recipes. The men folk will go through these, and they will say, "Why don't you cook this?" or, "What are you going to cook today?" Many times the men have to know what we are going to cook, because they bring home the groceries the wife orders. The cooking is important to the whole family. In our report we fully describe what we did on this visit and what the mother's problems were. These reports are filed in a folder with the family name on it. If the woman is making good progress, it shows in the reports. Our leader gathers such cases to show the head office in Ames, so these reports really serve a purpose.

One time a lady from Ames and another one from Washington, D.C., visited our children's program, where we were teaching children to cook. Our reports go to the officials and then there is feedback to the agencies interested in what we are accomplishing.

Sometimes in my work I have had good success. For example, a woman named June and her family were ready and desiring to learn to cook. She just boiled potatoes, fried meat, and opened canned vegetables. We worked with her and she learned how to cook and bake many things. Men like pie and her husband is no exception. She can make a good pie now. The children used to get into the refrigerator and eat the food before she would get it cooked. They said they were hungry. They were always munching. They don't do this as much now. They eat better at the table.

June does the best she can with Jim bringing home the groceries: The rent has to be paid, the car payment has to be paid, and the other bills and the groceries get what is left. On the week that everything comes due, there isn't much left for groceries. She does what she can for good nutrition and tries to serve vegetables.

She put in a garden. It went to weeds the first year but this year it's better. Now the good thing is the story hour. She has one child who is story hour age. She is coming out of her home now and helping with the story hour. This is wonderful; she needs this contact with other women. This is progress.

As I was thinking about coming to this Workshop, I asked June what might help. We thought that nutrition spots on TV would be effective. These women watch TV. A lot has been done about cancer and smoking education by spot advertising. Common folks can understand these, when they are very short and to the point—for example, ask them, "Have you had your vitamin A today?" Tell them what foods it is found in and how many servings you need. A 15-minute or 30-minute program that says you fix a fancy dish with things you don't have is not for them. Just spot items. Some say TV is too expensive, but if it will reach the people we should use it. Why print materials they don't read?

We do not always achieve success easily. I worked with one lady for 2 years without ever getting into her house. This was in connection with Head Start. I would go and think I was going to get out of the car and into the house. She would come out and we would visit in the car. No matter how cold or hot, we visited in the car.

This lady was a high school graduate and she read a lot. Conditions were such that the house she lived in was very poor. They even had to haul their water. Her husband's concern for the family was quite limited. He thought she could feed a family of eight or ten on about $10.00 a week. That's about all he gave her for groceries. I never felt I got very far with her.

One time when the Head Start teacher and I visited, the children were all excited because the teacher was coming. They pitched in with the cleaning. We saw the kitchen; I thought it wasn't bad, but the teacher thought it was pretty bad. I could understand. The mother made a good effort, considering everything. Right after that a fire destroyed the house and they moved into a better one. The woman is doing better with her housekeeping and working with a mothers' group. She really had the ability, but her previous environment had been too depressing. She knew how, but needed encouragement. Now she began to develop her abilities and become interested in community affairs.

Another lady became interested in gardening. I really didn't make any progress with her in cooking, but in gardening and canning she is doing quite a bit.

I work with about 25 families. We all are doing well with about ten top families. I wish we could do better with all of them.

We like to set goals for both the children and the mothers. We go from easy things in cooking to more complicated things. There is a wealth of materials from the state extension headquarters in Ames, Iowa. There isn't anything they don't have, but we can't give it all to the ladies. They couldn't deal with it all at once, but they can work up gradually.

We evaluate these families. What are the family's values? They differ from mine. Each person has his own. One of the most important things is environment. A child growing up in one type of environment will be one thing and one growing up in another will be something else. Also goals are important. Do they live from day to day? If you don't have some hope for tomorrow, even if it's a hope for good weather, it's not much of a life.

What about management? We say they need money, but they need management more—management of time, of the resources that they have, and of the money that they do get. We evaluate their resources. What resources do they have? Health is a resource that should not be overlooked.

To work with them, we need to identify their problem-solving ability, and we need to help them with the process of analyzing as well as solving those problems.

It is a really complex thing working with these people, but if you are their friend, I think you are going to find that it will have an impact all their lives. I think my age (60+) helps a great deal because they look to me as a mother figure. They think I've had experience, and this has weight. These children welcome a visitor to their homes with open arms. It makes a very big difference to them. There can be good communication.

This work, complex as it is, is very satisfying, because we know it really needs to be done.

LOUIS A. ZURCHER, JR.

Characteristics of the Disadvantaged as They Affect Communication

Both the title of this Workshop, "Communication for Change with the Rural Disadvantaged," and the assigned title of this session, "Characteristics of the Disadvantaged as They Affect Communication," are stimulating, if not provoking. Indeed, the key concepts in those titles afford us opportunity to discuss assumptions we make about people and programs as we attempt systematic poverty intervention. For example, what do we mean by "disadvantaged"? Disadvantaged how? Disadvantaged why? Who labels and assesses "characteristics"? How are they interpreted and evaluated and with what impact upon intervention choice? What do we mean by "communication"? From whom; to whom; for what reason; for whose benefit? What do we mean by "change"? In whom or in what? At whose instigation and for what purpose?

When we address ourselves specifically to communication for change, are we aiming to modify cultural patterns or psychological traits that perpetuate economic disadvantage? Do we aim to modify those economic and power distributions within society and the community that we feel create and maintain the disadvantaged state? What is the balance of our efforts among those foci for change?

Are we communicating about change that *has* taken place, that *will* take place, or that we *hope* will take place—or all three?

These questions are not raised for academic discourse nor only as a means to unearth our value orientation to poverty, to the poor, and to ameliorative styles. They are raised because the answers we explicitly or implicitly give can determine the effectiveness of intervention efforts, and whether such intervention will serve as a process of change or a process of control.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISADVANTAGED

Much has been written about characteristics of the poor, particularly about the ways in which their characteristics deter, support, or are targets of intervention programs. The most apparent characteristics that engender ameliorative action are economic and environmental—those readily observed by most citizens as the "social problem." Those characteristics include disadvantaged levels of income, education, job skills, housing, health care, diet, and employment. If a change agent and his intervention program focus on those characteristics, then the orientation for change is primarily systemic. That is, the sources of poverty are seen primarily to be within and among social and economic institutions. It is assumed that restructuring the institutions for more equitable distribution of goods and services will mitigate, if not eliminate, conditions of poverty and characteristics of the disadvantaged described above.

The second set of characteristics includes personality factors, attitudes, value orientations, interpersonal relationships, and general behavioral patterns. Examples of those characteristics include: alienation from society, from others, and from self; anomie; present orientation; fatalism; powerlessness; isolation; suspiciousness of and antagonism toward authority and outsiders; apathy; hostility; particularism; social and personal disorganization; a preference for the informal over the formal; feelings of inferiority; dependency; passive-aggressiveness; lack of impulse control; no sense of history; low motivation; low level of aspiration; fragile social relationships; negativism; paucity of social roles; role confusion; extra-punitiveness; traditionalism; anti-intellectualism; helplessness; preference for the concrete over the abstract in language and thought; preference for doing rather than thinking; feelings of marginality; sense of resignation; hesitancy to assume leadership; feelings of insecurity; feelings of meaninglessness in their lives and the world around them; tendency toward authoritarianism; value for tangible and immediate results from their activities; lack of family solidarity and stability; lack of participation in community voluntary associations; and disinclination to develop community organizations beyond the household. If the change agent and his intervention program focus on these characteristics, then the orientation for change is primarily sociopsychological. That is, the sources of poverty are seen primarily to be within the personality and the interactive patterns of the poor themselves. It is assumed that restructuring those patterns will enable the disadvantaged to avail themselves more fully of opportunities within the ongoing system of social and economic institutions.

A third view of characteristics of the disadvantaged combines the systemic and sociopsychological perspectives. The patterns and structures of social institutions are seen to be sources of poverty, but personal adaption to conditions of poverty is seen to result in a somewhat distinct personality pattern among the disadvantaged. The factors given above vary in degree, but are somewhat consistent and can interfere with poverty intervention efforts by the advantaged. If the change agent and his intervention program elect to focus on this network of sources and factors, then the orientation for change is both systemic and sociopsychological. It is assumed that modifying selected structural conditions *and* personality factors more effectively and speedily accomplishes the ameliorative goals of poverty intervention.

The origin, content, strategy, and target of communication for change vary among change agents and intervention programs according to whether—given poverty as the dependent variable—social institutions, sociopsychological characteristics of the disadvantaged, or some combination thereof is considered to be the independent variable.

THE CULTURE OF POVERTY

How general and consistent the sociopsychological characteristics of the disadvantaged are, and how important they are in maintaining poverty, have been issues for considerable debate—debate most fully represented by arguments concerning whether or not a "culture of poverty" exists. Valentine (1968, p. 3) extensively discusses the "culture of poverty" concept, first defining "culture" as including:

> . . . all socially standardized ways of seeing and thinking about the world; of understanding relationships among people, things, and events; of establishing preferences and purposes; of carrying out actions and pursuing goals. In a general sense, then, culture consists of the rules which generate and guide behavior. More specifically, culture of a particular people or other social body is everything that one must learn to behave in ways that are recognizable, predictable, and understandable to those people.

"Culture of poverty," then, tends to suggest that the disadvantaged live in and maintain a relatively discrete (from the rest of society) social and cultural world, in which they share a unique organization of experience and standards for perceiving, predicting, judging, and acting. Valentine documents parallel concepts, such as "lower class culture," "low income life styles," "lower class Negro culture," "culture of unemployment," "slum culture," and "dregs culture."

Drawing from those conceptualizations and from his review of the literature, Valentine defines three currently popular models of poverty and the poor. The first model posits the disadvantaged to be living in a "self-perpetuating subsociety with a defective, unhealthy subculture." The second model posits the disadvantaged to be living in an "externally oppressed subsociety with an imposed, exploited subculture." The third model posits the disadvantaged to be living in a "heterogeneous subsociety with variable, adaptive subcultures."

Valentine's three models differ in the degree to which the poor are perceived to be relatively discrete from society–psychologically, socially, and culturally–and in the degree to which poverty and associated characteristics have been generated from and maintained by structural properties of society. Consequently, the models also differ with regard to preferred strategies for poverty intervention, ranging from changing characteristics of the disadvantaged by therapeutic imposition to massive revolution resulting in sweeping alterations of traditional institutions and economic distribution.

Valentine states that model 1 has provided most of the conceptual underpinnings for contemporary poverty intervention, especially for the "war on poverty." This model represents the sociopsychological orientation for intervention discussed earlier. The message is communicated to the poor that after they have shed certain unfortunate personality characteristics, i.e., after they have gained conventional respectability, they will have better opportunity to escape their own web of poverty.

Model 2, according to Valentine, is epitomized by the "New Left," and argues that structural and economic change alone will ameliorate conditions of poverty. This model represents the systemic orientation for intervention we have discussed earlier. The message is communicated to the poor that poverty can be ameliorated only by disrupting the stratification barriers and opening the opportunity systems. When such changes obtain, poverty will cease to be.

Model 3 proposes that a poverty subculture exists and with it distinct personality characteristics, but the subculture is not isolated from society. Many of the value and norm systems operating in society are woven through the poverty subculture and they influence modes of adaptation to poverty conditions. This model represents the dual sociopsychological and systemic orientation discussed earlier. The message is communicated to the poor that poverty intervention is most effective and most expeditious when it involves both structural and personal change. Poverty is defined to be the result of a complex of factors shared by disadvantaged *and* advantaged in the same society; consequently, intervention extends across socioeconomic strata.

In accepting the major proposition of model 3—that the disadvantaged live in a heterogeneous subsociety with variable, adaptive subcultures—we can also accept without bias that certain sociopsychological characteristics may emerge as a result of functional adaptation to the subcultures. Valentine, to illustrate further, shows how one litany of characteristics can be reinterpreted as healthy adaptation. He quotes Oscar Lewis's (1966, p. xlvii–xlviii) description of the poor as follows:

> Personal identity, character, and world view are weak, disorganized, and restricted; on the level of the individual, major characteristics are strong feelings of marginality, of helplessness, of dependency, and of inferiority . . . weak ego structure, confusion of sexual identification, lack of impulse control . . . little ability to defer gratification and to plan for the future . . . resignation and fatalism . . . belief in male superiority . . . tolerance for psychological pathology . . . provincial and locally oriented . . . very little sense of history.

Valentine (1968, p. 133–135) then demonstrates that the orientations of the disadvantaged described by Lewis are realistic:

> Feelings of marginality, helplessness, and dependency are often in accord with the objective character of life circumstances.
>
> Conflict about sex roles appears in the context of dramatic contradictions between dominant value ideals and objective practical possibilities, thus not requiring the depth interpretation of psycho-pathology.
>
> Impulse control and gratification deferral vary situationally and may be maximized when a future reward can be realistically predicted.

Planning for the future occurs when prospective alternatives are perceived as at least potentially controllable by choice, which may be relatively infrequent.

Resignation and fatalism may readily give way to individual aspiration or group confidence when there is a change in perceived opportunity.

Assertions of male superiority reflect a value orientation of the *total* culture, with perhaps some added strength for the lower class, in the form of compensation or wishful thinking in relation to objective limits on the effectiveness of the traditional male role.

Relevant tolerance for behavior conventionally regarded as pathological may be positively functional in terms of at least two aspects of socio-economic deprivation:

Some conventional abnormal behavior patterns are adaptive.

Often the only extracommunity treatment available is punitive or custodial.

Provincialism and local orientation are balanced by knowledge of beliefs about the wider world, including historical conceptions, political orientations, and by some sense of identity with other groups of poor.

Interpreting characteristics of the disadvantaged as adaptive allows the advantaged intervener to consider his impact on communication for change without temptations to moralize and with full awareness that the characteristics do not exist in isolation from significant influences of society. The literature discussing "culture of poverty" becomes more useful toward understanding the intervention and communication processes. The chances that the poor will be forced to agree to a deprecatory "psychological contract" (Zurcher, 1970) to escape poverty are diminished.

Considering sociopsychological characteristics of the disadvantaged as adaptive not only eases negative judgment and allows interpretation of characteristics as relatively positive, but provides for discovery of absolute strengths among the poor. Riessman (1965), for example, reports the following attributes:

> . . . the cooperativeness and mutual aid that mark the extended family; the avoidance of the strain accompanying competitiveness and individualism; the equalitarianism, informality, and humor; the freedom from self-blame and parental overprotection; the children's enjoyment of each other's company and lessened sibling rivalry; the security found in the extended family and a traditional outlook; the enjoyment of music, games, sports, and cards; the ability to express anger; and finally, the physical style involved in learning.

These attributes are judged to be strengths by Riessman, because they contribute to personal well-being and psychological growth. They also can be considered important factors by which the communication processes attendant to poverty intervention can be enhanced. The intervener might note the strengths and build his communication efforts around them.

Drawing from the literature on poverty to gain some understanding of characteristics of the poor can be helpful, but generalizing must be done cautiously. Ideally, other workers' reports would be considered hypotheses for testing among the disadvantaged with whom the practitioner or researcher is concerned. Empirical (preferably ethnographic) studies of the characteristics and their impact should, if possible, be conducted within each intervention area chosen. Thus, the intervener might know what characteristics had emerged within that population as a result of adaptation to idiosyncratic neighborhood or community conditions.

Another benefit in considering sociopsychological characteristics of the disadvantaged as adaptive is that it forces consideration of the characteristics of the advantaged that are relevant to the communication for change process.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ADVANTAGED

The advantaged adapt to particular sets of social and economic conditions in their environments, just as the disadvantaged do. That adaptation also reflects and influences sociopsychological characteristics. If we consider the advantaged to possess characteristics that are the obverse of the disadvantaged (as described by Lewis above), the following would be derived:

> Personal identity, character and world view are strong, organized, and unrestricted. On the level of the individual, major characteristics are strong feelings of belonging, of powerfulness, of independence, and of superiority. The advantaged manifest strong ego structures, clarity of sexual identification, and possess impulse control. They have considerable ability to defer gratification and to plan for the future, and a sense of activism and control over their environment. The advantaged indicate a belief in the equality of the sexes, and have an intolerance for psychological pathology. They are cosmopolitan in orientation, and possess a keen sense of history.

Reversing reported characteristics of the disadvantaged and applying the reversals to the advantaged rather dramatically reveals the flaws of generalizing and assuming homogeneity. The advantaged reader *knows* that all of those characteristics do not obtain among his fellows, or at least that they obtain unequally. It may occur to him, therefore, that the reverse of the characteristics do not so facilely apply to all of the disadvantaged with whom he is concerned, and that, ideally, the quality and quantity of such characteristics is an empirical question. Nonetheless, it is apparent that, generally, there are some differences in sociopsychological characteristics between advantaged and disadvantaged, and they may affect the communication for change process. The significance of those differences for intervention is that they exist as a result of *two* sets of characteristics—advantaged and disadvantaged—and not just the disadvantaged alone.

Awareness of his own sociopsychological characteristics may help the intervener to scrutinize the perhaps latent intent of the intervention. Rainwater (1970) categorizes intervention efforts into five modes, now popularly in operation: moralizing, medicalizing, naturalizing, apotheosizing, and normalizing. The moralizing intent depicts the poor as being spiritually or morally weak and urges that they be "saved." The medicalizing intent classifies the poor as being psychologically ill and suggests that they be "cured." Sociological "illness" is contained in this purview, manifest in a perception that the poor are socially disorganized and need to be made more "cohesive." The naturalizing intent interprets poverty as a natural process, which should be studied, but not necessarily interfered with, except by charity and other forms of *noblesse oblige.* The apotheosizing intent proclaims the poor to be somehow more "existential," more "natural," and romanticizes their state. They are contrasted with the "alienated middle class" and found to be better off, at least according to some philosophical base. Last, the normalizing intent considers the poor to be victims of social circumstance, and argues for providing them with realistic access to society-at-large. When the intervener examines his own characteristics as they are relevant to the communication process, he will be stimulated to evaluate the intent of the intervention program and perhaps find it represented among the five Rainwater modes. The implication of the mode (or modes) for communication for change may then be considered critically.

The sociopsychological characteristics of the advantaged—the middle-class Americans—generally, are assumed by poverty interveners to be those for which the disadvantaged should opt. Or, at least, the advantaged's characteristics are considered to be those most useful for "success" in American social institutions. However, the institutions, the value orientations, the "successes," and the personality factors associated with middle-class America have been soundly criticized by social philosophers—Buber, Tillich, Fromm, Marcuse, to name a few. Sometimes the critique of the middle class includes apotheosizing the poor, but the potential relevance of the critiques for poverty intervention remains. Into what kind of experiential world are the poor being encouraged to enter more fully?

In the same context, some observers report increasing numbers of young persons identifying with what is called the "counterculture." When juxtaposed with the "old culture," the counterculture normatively supports, for example, personal rights over property rights, human needs over technological requirements, cooperation over competition, sexuality over violence, distribution over concentration, the consumer over the producer, ends over means, openness over secrecy, personal expression over social reforms, gratification over striving, and communal love over Oedipal love (Slater, 1970). If one compares the value orientations of the counterculture with reported sociopsychological characteristics of the poor, some points of similarity can be noted. Ironically, then, advantaged poverty interveners may be exhorting the disadvantaged to embrace certain value orientations (e.g., striving competitive drive, acquisition of material goods, productivity) while their own offspring may be rejecting those orientations verbally or by actions or both.

These issues and paradoxes go beyond the scope of this paper, but nonetheless are important enough to raise. The counterculture thrust may be the catalyst for the kind of culturally revitalizing social movement Valentine implies could be the optimum strategy for poverty amelioration. In this paper a more mundane, but more readily implemented intervention and communication strategy, will be considered.

COMMUNICATION AS CHANGE: A SUGGESTED STRATEGY

In a 2-year study of an OEO community action program, I considered sociopsychological differences between advantaged and disadvantaged members of a poverty board (the program's central decision-making body) to be an empirical situation. A questionnaire was administered to the 61 board members—a questionnaire that included scales for the following sociopsychological variables (Zurcher, 1970, p. 66–67):

–*activism* (sense of mastery over the physical and social environment)
–*anomie* (social malintegration; the internalized counterpart of social dysfunction)
–*integration with relatives* (degree of dependence upon family)

–*achievement value orientation* (value for, and motivation toward, academic and occupational achievement, particularly regarding striving for status through social mobility)
–*future orientation* (indication of a willingness to plan for the future)
–*isolation* (feeling of separation from the majority group or its standards)
–*normlessness* (feeling of purposelessness; absence of values that might give direction to life)
–*powerlessness* (feelings of helplessness; inability to understand or influence the events upon which one depends)
–*alienation* (sum total of isolation, normlessness, and powerlessness subscales; taken to indicate a general syndrome of alienation)
–*particularism/universalism* (value orientation toward institutionalized obligations of friendship versus value orientation toward institutionalized obligations to society)

The questionnaire responses revealed striking and consistent differences, statistically significant in the directions hypothesized, between the advantaged and disadvantaged. That is, the disadvantaged scored lower than the advantaged in activism, achievement orientation, and future orientation, but higher than the advantaged in anomie, isolation, normlessness, powerlessness, alienation, and particularism. These results were taken to indicate contrasting views of self-in-society that reflected adaptation to the exigencies of differing social and economic circumstances.

Observation in 19 regular and 17 executive sessions of the poverty board and interviews with the participants revealed patterns of behavior that illustrated differences in the measured scale variables—differences that were particularly relevant to communication and interaction between disadvantaged and advantaged representatives. The following are some examples of issues on which debate, often heated, centered during early board meetings (Zurcher, 1970, p. 70–71):

> The advantaged tended to view the local poverty program as they might any organized community action effort—optimistically, and confident that their efforts would bring results beneficial to their community. They took their participation, and the fact that such participation would be meaningful, for granted. The disadvantaged seemed pessimistic about the meaningfulness of their participation, and expressed the feeling that their efforts would most likely not bring results (activism).
>
> The advantaged, appearing convinced that community officials wanted to help with programs, wanted to invite their cooperation. The disadvantaged seemed to feel that most local officials did not care about the poor, and that officials in general are guilty until proven innocent (anomie).

The advantaged appeared to be influenced by the conviction that, with dedicated and concerted effort, those community factors that perpetuated poverty could be changed, and that the local poverty program could be made into the best in the country. The disadvantaged at first seemed neither so certain that the system could be changed, nor that it would be judicious to exert as much energy as the program demanded, since the rewards at that time were rather unclear (achievement orientation).

The advantaged appeared quite tolerant of program delays endemic to the bureaucratic process, and argued for the importance of "long range programming," and "feasibility studies." The disadvantaged seemed remarkably impatient with such delays, and insisted upon "action now" (future orientation).

The disadvantaged seemed often to indicate a perception of a "have versus have not" or an "us versus them" struggle. At the onset they avoided identifying with the community (isolation).

The advantaged tended to believe that if the board conformed to OEO standards, if it met the criteria for community need, and if the applications were prepared according to rules and regulations specified by OEO, they could with some confidence expect grants for additional projects (contingent, of course, upon the availability of federal funds). The disadvantaged, on the other hand, did not initially seem willing to invest the rules, regulations, criteria, or procedures with purposeful value, or to accept the relative predictability of outcome from conformity to those norms (normlessness).

The advantaged appeared to be satisfied with their degree of individual influence in board decision-making processes, and with the potential impact of those decisions for community change. The disadvantaged did not seem to feel at first that board action would change much for the poor, or that their own influence within board decision-making processes was significant (powerlessness).

The advantaged tended to accept board members as cooperating officials on the basis of title, and to encourage the impartial and objective hiring of program staff (universalism). The disadvantaged tended to favor the evaluation of others not on the basis of title, but rather according to "what kind of guy he is," and to insist that one should give jobs to people he knows or to whom he is related (particularism).

Given the social situation of the poverty board, in which advantaged and disadvantaged individuals exchanged communications concerning poverty intervention programming, at least initially there was considerable opportunity for different expectations and consequent misunderstanding and conflict, concerning goals, strategies, and implementations. The sources of the difficulties obviously were not the characteristics of the disadvantaged alone, nor the characteristics of the advantaged alone. Rather, problems arose amid the interactions of characteristics of both groups and also as a result of heterogeneity within each of the two groups.

During the early board meetings there was little effective two-way communication concerning change. The advantaged dominated the meetings while the disadvantaged passively listened. The advantaged perceived the poverty program in accordance with the adaptive styles of middle-class life and acted accordingly. However, as time went on and interactive experiences continued, the disadvantaged increasingly participated in the decision-making processes and steadily became more receptive to, indeed became sources of, communication for change.

After seven months of participation in the poverty board, some interesting shifts in sociopsychological characteristics were measured among the disadvantaged. Activism and achievement orientation increased, and particularism decreased significantly. Anomie, integration with relatives, isolation, normlessness, and alienation decreased less markedly but consistently. Observation of the disadvantaged revealed behavioral changes paralleling the shifts in scale responses.

The changes, which could be interpreted as moving toward a more "middle-class" sociopsychological profile, were very much infleunced by the quantity and quality of participation available to the disadvantaged board members. Those who were dissatisfied with their participation, or who felt they did not have opportunity to be enough in meaningful participation, in most cases either did not change in the variables measured or did change in directions *opposite* (e.g., reported more feelings of powerlessness) to those hoped for by the poverty program.

These findings suggest some important considerations to be made when planning communication for change in poverty intervention programs. For the advantaged merely to communicate intended or actual structural changes supporting poverty amelioration is important, but not necessarily enough to encourage rapid receptivity among the poor. For the advantaged only to communicate to the disadvantaged that they are expected to change in certain sociopsychological characteristics is not enough to encourage social change. What does seem effective is for the advantaged to consider thoroughly their own perceptions of poverty and the poor and then earnestly work to provide the disadvantaged with vital and equal participation in decisions concerning poverty intervention strategies, goals, and implementations. Furthermore, the disadvantaged should be involved at the onset as sources, not just targets, of communication messages concerning change. This approach not only can encourage receptivity to poverty intervention, not only can stimulate new and more effective ideas for intervention, but also can engender among the participating disadvantaged significant changes in sociopsychological characteristics—changes that provide them with more chance to opt, if they wish, the middle-class way of life.

The advantaged board members did not change in any of the sociopsychological scale variables measured. They did not as a result of participation become, for example, less achievement oriented or more alienated. They did, however, become strikingly more sensitive to and more receptive of the adaptive world view of the disadvantaged. They discovered it was more effective to stop communicating *at* the disadvantaged and begin communicating *with* them, as equal partners in poverty intervention. Early unevenness in the communication process was taken to be part of the change dynamic itself.

This approach has been conceptualized elsewhere as the "Overlap Model" for social change (Zurcher and Key, 1967) and assumes that as the disadvantaged and advantaged interact under equal status conditions toward a common goal, the initial differences in expectations and attitudes will begin to dissipate or merge. The action of mutual participation, the experience of growing cooperation, and the task orientation influence the evolution of effective communication.

The role of individuals, such as the disadvantaged members of poverty boards or other indigenous leaders, cannot be minimized in communication strategies for poverty amelioration. Such individuals indeed differ from middle-class representatives in their world view, but do not differ so markedly as those who are not indigenous leaders or who never voluntarily approach poverty intervention programs. The marginal role of an indigenous leader is difficult and most strenuous, but such men and women can be effective change agents, influencing perceptual changes among advantaged and disadvantaged, and influencing changes among those social systems that perpetuate poverty (Zurcher, 1969).

CONCLUSIONS

The characteristics of the disadvantaged that affect communication for change are important primarily insofar as they differ from the characteristics of the advantaged who formulate communications based upon their (not the disadvantaged's) world view. Each time a communication for poverty intervention is developed, it should be diagnosed before it becomes part of the transmittal process. The diagnosis should include questions concerning the source, content, and target of the communication as follows:

Source of Communication

Who is the source?

What are the characteristics, individual and social, of the source?

Why is this individual or group the source?

Who determined who the source should be?

How does the source perceive the purpose of the communication?

What does the source intend the impact of the communication to be?

Who benefits from the communication?

How is the source perceived by the target with regard to legitimacy, credibility, and sincerity?

Content of Communication

What is the content?

Why is this the content?

Who determined what the content should be?

What assumptions does the content reflect about the target of the communication?

What elements of the content are oriented toward change? What kind of change?

To whom is the content understandable and meaningful?

Who benefits from the content?

Target of Communication

Who is the target?

Why are they the target?

Who determined who the target should be?

What aspects of the target are to be affected by the communication? Individual characteristics? Social environment? Structural conditions?

What role has the target played in formulating the sources, content, and purpose of the communication?

It might be profitable to delineate three kinds of change-related communication: communication *for* change; communication *of* change; and communication *as* change. Communication *for* change transmits motivational messages—encouragements to join, to learn, to be trained, to receive service, to modify some set of personality or social characteristics. Such communication can be informative, educational, and accomplish at least some degree of poverty amelioration. Communication *of* change transmits what is happening or has happened that impinges upon the conditions that sustain poverty. This form of communication can create a sense of legitimacy, of effectiveness, for poverty intervention attempts. Communication *as* change combines both the operations of communication *for* and *of* change, and adds an important perspective of the change process. Communication *as* change accepts that there might be differences in sociopsychological characteristics between the advantaged and disadvantaged, but postulates that those differences are a result of alternative, often healthy adaptations to varying conditions of economic well-being. The characteristics of both the advantaged and disadvantaged are seen to be part of the same overall societal milieu and to have points of similarity as well as difference. Whenever possible, the characteristics are assessed empirically rather than generalized from the literature. If assumptions are to be generalized, a sense of awareness of the heterogeneity among the poor and not-poor is maintained.

The communication *as* change approach involves as many of the communication processes—that is, during the planning stages—and continues their involvement throughout implementation and revision. Those disadvantaged who participate as indigenous leaders serve as bridges between poor and not-poor, facilitating communication and themselves experiencing shifts toward greater self-reliance and self-confidence. When indigenous leaders from specific neighborhoods or communities are involved in intervention efforts, the danger of erroneously generalizing specific assumptions about characteristics of the poor is lessened. The indigenous leaders, particularly if recruited from among different subgroups (e.g., ethnic groups and levels of deprivation) in the target area, will have adapted to the same social circumstances as the rest of the target population and consequently will more or less match the characteristics (or at least understand them more fully). Assumptions about the characteristics of the disadvantaged are replaced with the assumption that the indigenous leaders represent whatever the characteristics are and effectively can communicate change messages.

Poverty intervention programs, no matter how intense their rhetoric, will effectively change little unless they consider the characteristics of the interveners, the intervention strategy, and the explicit or implicit assumptions about the intervened. The communication process must be a participation process in which both advantaged and disadvantaged work together in equal status toward the task of poverty intervention. They must be aware of and respect the varying adaptation styles and world views and draw upon each other's skills and experiences. Ultimately, the goal of intervention is to provide individuals who have no or few alternatives to the quality of their lives; participation best reveals those alternatives and implements communication *as* change.

Two characteristics shared by most Americans, advantaged or disadvantaged, are the need to maintain some satisfactory degree of self-esteem and the need to maintain some feeling of efficacy and control in one's social and physical environment. If poverty intervention communications cannot indicate by opportunities and action that both of those needs can be met, then those communications probably will be rejected or ignored.

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BUFORD DOBIE
RENE BARRERA

Why Communication Is Difficult

MR. BUFORD DOBIE

Rural poverty is prevalent throughout our nation. It is more prevalent in the Appalachian area than the coastal plains of the East. It is in the Ozarks, the black belt in the South, and along the southern border. Also, distinct concentrations of poverty can be identified within a state or area. All of my work with the poor has been with the Mexican-Americans located in Starr County, South Texas.

In this area, low income level is not the only symptom of poverty. Such things as limited education, poor housing, and nutritional problems among all age groups are also symptoms. When there are many children or aged persons or both, dependent upon those of working age, you can have poverty. Most of us realize that these symptoms are typical of families considered poor. In our area you could also add the Spanish heritage that 92 percent of the population have.

Mexican-American farmers are generally in the low income group. Their farm sales average less than a fourth of those of the Anglos, and their outside income is about 40 percent lower. Mexican-American farmers tend to be involved in the types of farming that require less capital investment. They make fuller use of their family labor supply, their households averaging 1.2 persons larger than non-Mexican-Americans. Their farms reflect the cultural and geographic factors of their location.

The marketing values of the Mexican-American farms in this area averaged about $4,900 in 1964, compared with over $21,000 on the other farms. More than half of the Mexican-American farms had marketable products of less than $1,200 and almost two thirds of them had sales of less than $2,500. Because of their smaller outside income, the Mexican-Americans depend heavily on their farms for their living. They appear to have spent a smaller portion of their gross farm income for each production expense than the other farmers.

The Mexican-American farm operator has had fewer years of formal education than the others. Only 40 percent had finished eight elementary grades as compared with 75 percent of the Anglos. Only 18 percent were high school graduates compared with 42 percent of the Anglos. Mexican-Americans on low income farms have less chance for an education, especially at the high school level, than those on the larger farms. Although the younger Mexican-Americans are better educated than their elders, they appear to be closing the gap between themselves and the younger Anglos only very slowly.

A little over 80 percent of Mexican and non-Mexican groups in this area reported income from sources other than their farm. The non-Mexican average over $1,000 more off-farm income per household than the Mexican-American; the differences widen on the smaller farms. The bulk of the outside income is earned by the farm operators themselves. The Mexican-Americans earn 40 percent less per day for work off the farm than the Anglos, because of their poorer education.

The first public efforts specifically to help the rural poor were begun in the 1930's under the New Deal. Emphasis slowed during the following war years. The next effort came during the 1950's under the Eisenhower administration and poverty programs continued to multiply during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

The impact of these programs has not been comparable to their numbers. Experience in these programs points out several problems involved in such efforts. In general, most of the benefits of the poverty programs are regressive for those aided. The well-to-do commercial farmer receives most of the benefits from these programs. Even the programs designed specifically for the low income farmers give a disproportionately large share of the benefit to those who need it least. The progressive and knowledgeable farmer within the group eligible for federal help is more effective in obtaining program funds. Such persons are also more active in the local voting booth, and they are necessary for the political propagation of the programs.

Another pitfall is the tendency to have too many programs with too little funds. We find that a large number of the low income families who are eligible for assistance do not receive the help. This is due partially to the political situation of the rural poor. They have no political pressure group working for them. They are not organized. They do not riot; they do not attract political attention at the polls; and they do not have funds to put their case before the American people through mass media.

The primary reason for my very limited success with low income producers, as I and the Texas Agricultural Extension Service realize, is that two major communication sources do not reach these farmers: Mass media are not effective, and extension meetings are on a higher level than the low income farmer can understand. The most effective means of working with low income farmers is through personal contact. This is the way the low income farmers will be provided with extension educational assistance.

The primary objectives of this assistance are to help increase their agricultural income and improve their general well-being. The key to our intensified farm learning program is working through personal contact. The use of nonprofessional aides intensifies the help given directly to the low income farmer to bring about changes in agricultural production and marketing practices. A county agricultural agent, such as myself, provides leadership for the program and is responsible for all technical recommendations related to the low income farmers through the aide. The aide and the county agent serve in a referral capacity as well, providing low income farmers with assistance from other federal agencies and offices.

MR. RENE BARRERA

I am a small farmer who also serves as a case worker in Starr County, South Texas. When Dobie started his intensive farm training program, I was a small farmer in a community of small farmers. He asked me to be on the committee, and, when it met, I was appointed chairman. They asked me to also be a demonstrator, since I am always trying something new and am surrounded by other small farmers. My neighbors can see how things work out on my farm and ask me about it.

There is a program under the Soil Conservation Service that helps farmers to develop water resources on their farms. Many small farmers don't know about this, so they get no help. But we make a special effort in our program to tell the farmers what aid is available to them. Whatever their problems, it is our job to help them if there is any government program that covers that problem.

Many of our people have very poor water resources. Sometimes they haul water from town in barrels. Other times they may have a well that doesn't function. We help them fill out the application form and file it. Often they can get 80 percent of the cost of the needed improvement from the government. Then our aide helps them deal with a contractor to get the work done. Sometimes we can help them find a used windmill to pump the water. With some ingenuity and not much expense, they can have water running into the kitchen.

In one case we got the county road maintenance people to open a ditch from one farmer to his neighbor. Then, with plastic pipe, the first man ran water from his new well to his neighbor who had no well. The same project enabled two families to have running water.

In another case, the people had a well that in a long dry season would give out. We helped with their application and they were able to get 80 percent financing for a cistern. Water is very important in our part of the country. Many people in rural areas suffer from lack of it.

Some of our clients live in substandard shacks and are not aware of help that is available. Sometimes we can help them apply for FHA (Federal Housing Administration) loans, so they can build simple but adequate houses.

You might wonder why we're involved in these problems. Most of these people speak Spanish and sometimes no English. They are not reached by most media that could tell them about government programs, and filling out complex application forms in English can be a big problem for them. So we help them. Sometimes our help is to explain to them why they are *not* eligible for a certain form of aid.

There are government programs to help people improve pasture land. Some of the farms used to be as bare as this floor, but now have thick grass 3 feet tall. This makes a big difference to their livestock. They can also get FHA loans to buy livestock.

Sometimes a client lives in a house that is strong enough, but needs to be remodeled. If he qualifies, the farmer can get a loan with no mortgage for up to $1,500 and 10 years to pay. They pay about $15 per month. The man may be on welfare, and then the state puts that much extra on his monthly check.

We also help farmers spray their livestock for ticks and other pests. Our program has a truck with spray equipment, and one of the aides goes around to instruct and help small farmers in this way.

One old gentleman we work with is 78 years old. He lives 6 miles off the highway, through five gates. His home is on an isolated hillside. When it rains, he can't get out because the creeks are full of water. He is a bachelor, and not on speaking terms with his family. He refuses aid, but our people are working with him.

He is an example of a problem in communication. He is uneducated, old, and can't get along with his relatives. His ways are set. You can try every way in the world to help him, but you cannot move him an inch. The only time he will move is if he gets sick and ends up in a nursing home. He gets about $70 assistance a month. He has a hand pump on his well. We are trying to get him an FHA loan to get a better pump and to repair his home. This old man illustrates that what you and I might think of as "aid" is not always wanted; some people have their own clear idea of what they need.

We have found that when we try to help these people in the ways I have mentioned, they take pride in what they have and fix it up. A lot of the old people are isolated, don't speak English, and have no transportation. When an aide visits, who is from the community and can speak to them in Spanish, the people have confidence in him and he can communicate with them on their own level. If someone they don't know goes out there, it will take much longer.

JAMES R. LYONS

Methods of Successful Communication with the Disadvantaged

In a country losing its sense of humor, finding it ever more difficult to laugh at itself and its problems, it is still possible to turn to the comic page and find "Peanuts" driving home a point that shatters the complacency of our own existence and exposes the reality of another's. The comic page mirrors our society in a way that still brings a touch of humorous relief to the front page antics of politicians, or the dreariness of the latest crime and war statistics. As in all art forms, the impact of the cartoonist may be varied. At times, he merely lets us laugh at the human situation experienced by every man.

A sketch by Jules Feiffer is a case in point. One of his drawings shows a rather decrepit old gentleman sitting in a straight-backed chair and musing:

> I used to think I was *poor.* Then they told me I wasn't poor, I was *needy.* Then they told me it was self-defeating to think of myself as needy, I was *deprived.* Then they told me deprived was a bad image, I was *underprivileged.* Then they told me underprivileged was overused, I was *disadvantaged.*

In the final panel of the sketch, the old man says, "I still don't have a dime."

When one looks at this progression of names in the Feiffer cartoon, which accurately mirrors the social scene over the past few years, one is immediately aware that each of these terms comes from a determined feeling of superiority. The old man in the cartoon is never seen as a complete human, but rather he lacks something that he needs in order to be accepted as complete. He is deprived from obtaining that which is mysteriously seen as quite necessary for human dignity, though no standard is spelled out.

It is the "worker," a term that in itself is an interesting indication of the way we have traditionally seen ourselves, who measures up to the undefined standard by which one becomes an acceptable member of our society. The mysteriousness and unspoken nature of this standard cannot be overstated, for while "everybody" knows what that standard is, and how to achieve it, in reality unless one is born into it, he is never able to become a part of the mainstream of American society.

For years, for example, society has told blacks that if they were only educated, clean, and able to eat with good table manners, they would be accepted into the fullness of American society and as heirs to all of its benefits. So thousands of blacks learned mainstream English, read the best books, attended the best schools, learned to drink martinis, and discovered at the end of it all that they were not really accepted by American society, because, in the final analysis, they were *still* black. Every black in America knows in order to be accepted it is more important to be white than educated. And every disadvantaged American today also knows that there is no real chance for his joining American society as it is presently constituted. Horatio Alger was unique, and he made it at the end of the nineteenth century. Few seem to have made it since; today, millions believe it is impossible. That this statement is fact is clearly indicated by today's cry for a reordering of our society into one in which arbitrary standards, both spoken and unspoken, are abolished and human dignity and experience are reaffirmed.

If we then are to communicate successfully with the disadvantaged of any color or culture, we must approach our whole task from a rather different series of postures, one that will realistically seek to communicate and not merely "fill a void" in someone else's life. The age of chauvinism and patronization is dead. That is true whether we are speaking about the blacks in the ghettos of the cities, or in the cotton patches of rural Georgia; about the students on the college campuses; or the women who seek to find their responsible role in life: All have not been able to adequately share in both the responsibilites and pleasures of American life.

I suggest that we no longer use "disadvantaged" peoples and begin to realize that we are dealing with "other-advantaged" groups. This is more than another in the nomenclature cycle, for it is a call to a toally different frame of mind. The "other-advantaged" have life patterns unlike our own, but they have a kind of dignity that should be recognized.

This approach gives dignity to both participants, while denying privilege or benefit to either. It recognizes that "standard" is not necessarily right. Problem solving may mean that the usual way needs changing and means must be sought for the "other-advantaged" to join in making these changes.

Concepts like "disadvantaged" have the impact of overkill, for it is felt that the "disadvantaged" are disadvantaged in every way. When we talk of the disadvantaged, we mean that the individual concerned is poor, but when we begin to deal with these persons–and even before that in our minds–we tend to think that he totally lacks education, family, possibilities, and probabilities. The beauty of the term "other-advantaged" is that we recognize that all of us in particular moments are disadvantged in some ways. This includes General Motors' executives, politicians running for office, professors on a campus, husbands, blacks, and whites. All of us are advantaged in some ways. There are strengths and advantages that so often go unrecognized among the poor.

Every effort ought to be made to enter into honest relations with each other. In the newspaper on any given day, one detects a big lie in the game of national and international politics. It is not so important to be honest, but more important to win in the end. The goal always justifies the means. This philosophy in a much less crude form is found in far too many situations when we are working with the "other-advantaged." Out of fear of not knowing, or of being proven wrong, out of recognition that what is planned will not work, hoping to buy time, or for any other of a thousand causes, one hears the big lie in social agencies, welfare offices, and *even* in the offices of those guardians of social justice, the police forces of America.

The response to this tactic is well known and equally well understood. The onus reverts to the "other-advantaged." It is felt *they* lie, they cover over important details and are generally not to be trusted. In this atmosphere there is absolutely no opportunity for any honest seeking of the solutions to mutual problems.

I remember one time when I was to deal with the most notorious prevaricator in agency history, I tried to break through this barrier. My opening remarks went something like this:

> I know that you don't trust me and think that whatever I say is a lie. I don't blame you. I've seen too much of that nonsense myself. But, I just want you to know that I don't trust you either. If you tell me anything, I'll check it out as carefully as I can. Maybe, if you do the same with me, and find I've told the truth, and I check you out and find that you've told the truth, we'll get to the point where we won't have to check each other.

He did, and we did. Once his innate fear of again being tricked was overcome, it became possible to discover what could be done within the system, what needed to be done outside the system, and more importantly what needed to be done to the system to solve some of his problems.

Communication is possible only when we recognize the variants of cultural background. It must be remembered that the same word or words do not always have the same meaning and that the "other-advantaged" often have other life patterns and different cultural backgrounds. In some instances, the ability to say "yes" when you mean "no" has made survival possible. Words and ideas can take on completely different connotations. The individual who is able to relate, and thereby communicate, is the one who is able to understand something of the subtleties of difference. I would not suggest that an individual ape the language around him. There is nothing more ridiculous than the jive talk of an individual who is enamored with the culture that produces it but has no real understanding of it. Rather, one ought to be aware of the distinctions found in a group and follow their feelings knowing the importance of these distinctions.

I have participated in formal interviews with bureaucrats who have insisted on calling the clients by their first names. There are a variety of reasons for this, but the most positive one is that it is an effort to relate to the client, one to one; to show that the bureaucrat and client are equal. The general effect, however, is just the opposite. Most of those with whom we are dealing are used to being called by their first names. They are Hattie, my cook, or Manuel, my hand. When one wants to give a sense of dignity and to show true equality, it can be done simply, by using Mister, Miss, or Mrs. The dignity conferred by this title is extremely important. It recognizes the adulthood and the individuality of the individual. It is interesting to note that while the person who used first names in these formal interviews also insisted that the client use his first name, I never saw one client who did so. They understood that to do so was not a sign of friendliness but rather of contempt. When speaking among themselves, titles are often used even if the situation is only semi-formal. "Brother" or "Sister" are often so used in the religious communities to which many of these people belong.

It is this kind of awareness of the importance of cultural differences that makes it possible for the breaking of stereotypes on both sides and the beginning of serious communication.

There are a number of other concepts about which we could talk. A week ago I was in New York City and heard Charles Long, a black historian and professor from the University of Chicago, speaking on black religion in America. Long made the point that it is important for blacks to realize that the opposite of black is not white, but black. The blacks in America today, he insisted, have to find their focus within themselves, and not in reaction to or against the white majority. I would add that the opposite of white in America today has to be seen as white. For far too long the white majority has lived with an air of superiority over the poor, or blacks, or what I am calling the "other-advantaged."

If white society is truly to survive, it must build on its own strengths, not in anger against the strengths of another. The majority must find itself, even as the blacks must find themselves.

I would also point out that the power to change is in the hands of the majority, and not in the hands of the minority. Many times I have the feeling that those of us who are engaged in working with the problems of the "other-advantaged" are talking to the wrong people. As one looks at history, one finds that no significant cultural changes have come as a direct result of minority group actions. I know we have *responded* to minority group initiatives, but it has always been from the majority group that the power to change has come.

If we are to communicate successfully with "other-advantaged" groups, they have to know that we are seeking to communicate with ourselves; that we are seeking to bring about the kind of society that we claim is just.

I have not given any real techniques for successfully communicating with other people. I recognize fully that there is no successful method. I could not say to every individual, "I do not trust you," and receive a positive reaction. Indeed, on most occasions that would be enough to kill any further attempts at communication. Each individual with whom we have contact has his own characteristics and background. Each ought to be approached in a manner that recognizes those differences, without techniques that seek to manipulate, but rather with honest interest in the problems to be mutually met. What I have tried to say is that communication is, has always been, and will always be possible only between two people of good will who will mutually seek one another.

One of the basic concepts of education, as pointed out earlier in the Workshop, is that it is more important what you *are* as an individual than what you know. I think that when it comes to communication, true communication is possible only between two people who know what they are as individuals. The reason for the failure of communication is often that we have too many lost people.

JEAN SUTHERLAND

Why Methods Fail

Some methods *can* work to change the life of the poor. But some methods are not right. For instance, you have a conference and decide what you want to do for the people, but the people you are trying to reach are not sitting around the table. You need to bring it to the people and communicate with us. You already have decided what you feel we need. If we tell you that's not what the community needs, you say we are not willing to accept what is given us. We are not saying we do not want to accept, we are saying we are people with our own ideas, even though poor, or whatever you want to call it.

Every time a project comes into a community, it's always a demonstration project. It's not something we can count on to be there for years. We are given a project for 2 years and then you say, "The poor people do not want it," and you take it away from us. We had Project Head Start in Brooklyn, but now they say they don't have the money for Head Start. Anything that benefits the poor, if the poor accept it, it's taken away. It's like a token.

We feel that white racism in communities or hospitals or other institutions is the cause of most of the problems in the poor areas. We have to reach our government with the idea that racism of all forms has to be stopped. You cannot build a nation on hatred—hatred for one color or the other--because you have not only poor blacks but poor whites. If you are one community together, you can make it.

Another problem is in our school system. The methods of teaching have to change to meet the needs of the children in the community, no matter what their color. If a child in Brooklyn moves to Washington or Chicago, they should be on the same subject. When a child comes from Washington or Chicago, he is about 2 years behind in reading. If the curriculum were taught so that all children could learn the same reading matter in Chicago or New York, those who move all over could keep up.

And then, you give us only a limited amount of education and you say to us, "Well, now you have it." That's not right. We need equal access to education. You can't know what one can do by looking at her skin and saying, "She can't do it. She is black, and doesn't have enough education." So we are saying to you, "Let us go to school from the first grade to the twelfth grade and then to college so you can't say we don't have enough." The system has to change to make our children qualified for what we want them to do.

We feel that in school the teachers are telling the children, "You cannot make it, you have to take a commercial program; you cannot go into an academic program." That's the wrong method. If you want the nation to progress, you try to help all children equally, regardless of the color of their skin.

I feel our hopes are in our young children regardless of their color. We feel we need a lot more good black and Puerto Rican teachers, especially men. They should be in school to let children know they have an image. Everything they see in front of them is white. All these years they have been told that black is nothing. Now they have a black awareness, a Puerto Rican awareness. All cultures are now feeling that they are as good as the white Americans. And all they are asking is to have a fair share. We are not asking to be given anything, but we are asking for a chance to show you what we can do. We have a lot to offer if we just had the opportunity to do what we want to do.

DISCUSSION

Neil Schaller

If most of the reason for failure of communication methods is white racism, are the communcation needs different when whites are trying to speak with other whites?

Jean Sutherland

You have to think of people, not just color, because color is only skin deep.

Give a person an opportunity to express what he can do. Don't think that school is the only place to get an education. A lot of people lack education, but still have lots of common sense. Let the poor offer something, rather than just saying that they have to do what you say. You also have to listen to what we are telling you. Too often we are told we have to learn this or that or listen to this or that.

Robert Crawford

Speaking of methods, we have to get away from the spray gun mentality—that communications can be sprayed onto people and they will somehow get the right ideas from it—and get back to what we have said in our Workshop here. Communication is a way in which you develop community between two persons or groups, regardless of color. It is a mutuality, a respect, a learning from each other. That's not a technique, but a principle. It is hard to do and is done differently in different situations.

Jean Sutherland

While you are sitting around here, how many people are you reaching? There should be more black and poor here. When you have a conference to discuss what you are going to do about a person, that person should be around to participate. But every time you have a conference it's always the same people—the ones who know everything. Bring in the people you don't think know too much and let them tell you how they feel. Look around this room. Everyone here knows a lot about the subject. But how many blacks or poor are here? You sit down and plan what you want, but how many blacks and poor get to plan what they want?

James Lyons

I agree with Mrs. Sutherland. It's the human element that makes communication possible. The majority community doesn't have to give a thing to the poor and the blacks. It just has to remove the obstacles that have been put in their way. We have too many obstacles. I think too many people feel we should be giving this program or that program, but I say if we just remove the obstacles, they can compete on a healthy basis. I think we'd find there aren't as many differences as we'd supposed.

I'd also like to note that as Dr. Zurcher listed the supposed attributes of the majority society—the sense of history, identity, direction, manhood, and so forth—those of us who are white Americans laughed, because we recognized that we don't have those things. Yet, I couldn't help thinking that perhaps we were defining what was happening in the black community and the concept of black power in which we now see a sense of direction, a sense of identity, and a sense of masculinity.

It's no longer important for me to talk to blacks, but I need to talk to myself and my white brothers because we are the ones who have real problems. We are the ones who don't have the identity. The blacks in American society, from my point of view, are doing all right. Yes, they have problems and are going to be working with them, but they have a sense of dignity with which the average white American has not come into touch. I think we are talking to the wrong people. We have a lot to say to ourselves in white America.

M. E. John

We shouldn't get to thinking of this as a problem only involving black-white relations. As far as rural America is concerned, whites far outnumber blacks in many states. Rural America is not just white and black, one advantaged and one disadvantaged. I can't help but feel that there are some fundamental attitudes that are class attitudes even in the white society itself.

For instance, I know many people in rural communities, and it is my impression that small successful businessmen and wage earners in rural America have a tendency to think of white disadvantaged as shiftless, irresponsible, dishonest, and deceitful; many of the same characteristics that we have come to stereotype as the attitudes of the white toward the black.

I'm not sure it is totally an attitude of race. I think there is a class attitude that cuts across race. When you say the white society has to get right with itself, I think we have to get right in terms of evaluating certain people *within* the white society. If we begin to do that, we *will* develop the understanding that will permit us to go from there to bettering our relations with blacks.

Where I live, I am sure there is much more bias toward women than there is toward blacks. In our own area, blacks have a favored position. Women are very disfavored in occupational terms. I woud also say in our area we will act generously toward people of other races but will not act generously toward a disadvantaged white. We have double standards, in many ways. We will excuse the race that has trouble in meeting certain standards, but we have the feeling that there is no excuse for poor whites, without ever going into the forces that shaped them.

I was getting a little bothered in the discussion this morning when we seemed to be referring to problems of the disadvantaged as just *black* problems. There *is* a black problem, but there is more than that.

Jean Sutherland

Yes, I realize there are a lot of poor whites, but give me one reason why they are poor. What holds them back? We have a color that holds us back. That's why we are poor. But what holds the poor white people back?

M. E. John

Many of the white poor people historically have not had a favorable social inheritance. For instance, in the hills of Pennsylvania (Appalachia) and West Virginia, the resources have disappeared through exploitation. Occupational opportunities have declined. The jobs are no longer there. Relief has come in to help at a low level and for money the only source of income. Some have become "professional reliefers" because of knowing no other opportunity. Children have been reared in this environment and, therefore, they think the major source of income is welfare. In many areas, this way of life is self-perpetuated. The forces of motivation and stimulation and the opportunities, are not there, creating small communities of disadvantaged rural poor. Maybe the rural and urban problems have common denominators, but they are not all alike in terms of the particular forces that operate.

William Kuvlesky

The point that Dr. John is making is that as we look at the disadvantaged, we see heterogeneity. Probably the basic problem about the disadvantaged as a category is class deprivation and class discrimination. For instance, in South Texas, outsiders who don't know the area tend to see problems there as a Mexican–Anglo ethnic antagonism, where it is often not; rather, it is often discrimination within the Mexican–American population. Perhaps this would be just as true with blacks when more differentiations develop in the black population than now exists. We may find in the very near future that blacks have more problems in contending with divisions in their own population than they will with the people on the other side of the racial line.

Another point, I think Jean Sutherland is saying to us is that communications cannot be very effective, that is, programs as modes of communication, unless there is some sincerity in relating to the understanding that the people being helped hold of their own needs.

Referring to white racism, she indicates that it appears that whites, looking at the problems of blacks, are just trying to pacify them and get them out of our hair. This shows up, she feels, in the insincerity of the solutions we create for them, some of which they even want and like, such as Head Start. She sees no continuity, splashing all over the place with demonstration projects with no serious long-term planning, so that when we get people involved there is no follow-up. This is insincerity! How can you have effective communication if you don't have trust, and how can you have trust if the people we are trying to help feel we are insincere? How can they feel otherwise when they encounter such ambivalent and inconsistent actions?

Robert Cobb

We have used some nice terms in these discussions. We have said "nutrition" rather than out-and-out hunger, so we say there's no hunger any more. We have the term "racism" instead of plain prejudice; everyone has prejudice. We should recognize what prejudices we operate from so we can then operate together. We are being dishonest in putting a brand on someone else. We have spoken of education, but what is education? It is to give people tools to be able to function in their society. It is not just a mass of facts; it is how to use those facts.

We in the church have major denominations that are well established in all parts of the nation. We all go through the same machine and come out tattooed; any place you go across the nation, you show your tattoo so you will be accepted. But there are other persons who have come up without the tattoo because they are of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We will not even listen to them. It is tragic, and yet it is the same pattern.

The same thing happens in government operations. We have the established criteria before a program can work. Why do you need a teacher at $7.50 per hour with a master's degree to oversee a day-care center and change diapers? Our criteria are wrong. We are pricing ourselves out of the job needing to be done.

Ralph Reeder

How many times have you gone to a physician and he has said, "I understand," when you are fairly sure he does not? He writes out something you do not understand, called a prescription. You take it somewhere, and then you take the pill.

I have a very good friend who is an intern and he tells me, "Since I found out how many evils beset man and how darn little we know, I think I should have gone into the insurance business!" The doctor may be operating in a void, but you do not know it and he does not tell you. You assume he has knowledge, and you take his pill and if it works, he congratulates you and you congratulate him with money. If it does not work, you come back and complain again and he tries something else.

In many ways this is what we attempt when we communicate. There is a valuable lesson that holds true in communicating with other people. The most dangerous statement you can make to another individual is, "I understand," because most of the time you do not, and he knows it. But you also do not turn the person off by saying, "I disagree."

The technique I have found valuable over 10 years of working with people I did not understand, and they knew I did not, was to sit down with the person and practice what is called "reflection." It is simple, but effective. Say, "Tell me some more," or, "It appears that you are very upset," or, "This appears to make you nervous." Contrast that with "I understand." You will receive much more from his response than you would from the statement, "I understand."

James Lyons

I used blacks as an example of the problems, not because I thought they were the only problem of our times, but because I thought they represented a common denominator in the areas we are talking about. I do not think it matters if you are black or white, or Puerto Rican in Harlem, or Mexican-American in Texas; some of the same communication problems exist and the same honesty is needed.

I tried to make it clear in my presentation that the concept of "other-advantaged" is more than a change of words. I look upon General Motors' executives today as perhaps the most severely disadvantaged people in America. I say that in all honesty. I work with with those people as well as those in the ghetto.

I want to emphasize that "disadvantaged" isn't only "poor!" There are people who are very wealthy and who are tremendously disadvantaged. I think the G.M. people have some tremendous "disadvantaged" problems, and they aren't related to money.

Some of the advantages we heard listed in relation to the poor—concepts of family, the concept of dignity, the concept of love, and and a concept of reaching out and neighborliness—are advantages that some of the so-called "advantaged" need desperately.

I am especially appreciative, for my own sake, of the idea of methodology being nothing more than camouflage. We talk about methods, because it gives us a clear conscience and we don't have to face the problems. So we gather data and continually develop and test out new methods though we never solve the problems.

On the concept of counseling, there is a kind of nondirective counseling. It is extremely valuable for those who will talk. Also there are times when you do have to give direction. The person who is sensitive many times reaches the point when he realizes that now is the time for one or two positive suggestions. This is extremely important.

Dr. Effie Ellis

This Workshop has been an excellent beginning, but I would hope that we would spend a little time on what we will communicate when we leave the meeting. What is the message that we will send? There are certain very fundamental messages that would apply to all the disadvantaged, regardless of skin color or anything else.

What I am trying to ask is, what will we try to communicate to the disadvantaged? Do we really talk about their problems—or *our* problems? What we are really talking about is conservation of human resources. There are a lot of programs in this country with various aims. As a physician, I see how many of them are not successful because of the inadequate means of communication used.

For instance, I remember years ago when family planning was only available to the rich. As I look around today, there are programs available to all women, at least the information. But they are concentrated almost completely on contraception with no attempt to talk about what family planning really means to the people. Even when we find illness in the mothers–such as uterine or breast cancer, or marked anemia, or malnutrition–we seem to be able to pass out the contraceptives, but we do not provide for basic medical care for these mothers. Many babies are being born damaged in this country because they do not have the proper nutrition. There are many babies who die in the first year of life for the same reason.

It seems to me that one of the real things needed in communication is to talk about the value of the individual and what the individual can become. How the individual can be molded to contribute.

We need to talk about the content we wish to communicate before we begin. In this way I think we will develop the necessary trust, because I have found that talking together about problems–attempting to build people for service–is the best way to get on with the show.

SUMMARIES OF DISCUSSIONS

RONALD C. POWERS
ANNA H. COLE

The Nature of the Communication Process

The nature of communication is complex and not subject to precise expression. The volume of literature written and the number of conceptual models devised on the subject have been excessive, making the nature of communication especially difficult to identify.

The discussion of this Workshop can be summarized best by the language of the current environmental warriors: "We have met the enemy, and they are us."

The Shannon–Weaver Model as presented by Brubaker was considered overly simplistic. It tended to overemphasize the sending function and give a secondary order and role to the receiver function. One might better come to grips with the complexity of communication by emphasizing the *iterative* requirement (the alternating from sender to receiver) in the communication model. This would indicate the need to give equal weight to receivers and senders. Moreover, it would stress the repetitiveness and gradual development of common understanding between senders and receivers. Emphasis on the concepts of the sender or the receiver would lead to a dichotomy as false as the dichotomy between leaders and followers.

To facilitate understanding of the communication process, a communication model must recognize the multilevel and multinetwork nature of the process. That is, while a model is designed to simplify reality to promote understanding, the critical complex elements cannot be ignored however untidy they may be in graphic or verbal presentations.

We cannot examine the role of communication in our failure to intervene successfully in the life of the rural people until—to paraphrase Ralph Reeder—we are willing to seek out bad news. Imagine an agency or program administrator from Washington sending out a request for the ten most miserable program failures. The mind boggles.

A central theme from the work groups was indictment against agencies and programs that operate as initiators and controllers of communication with the disadvantaged. There is a strong desire on the part of program designers to control the decision as to *when* to start and stop the communication process. Most observers of poverty programs recalled incidents when the program operator tried to move from a tense and even chaotic situation of receiving messages in a large group to one of controlled sending in a small group, e.g., "Why don't you select a committee of three and meet in my office tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. where we can talk this over." The discussion groups recommended that agencies begin the communication process by emphasizing the receiving function for themselves and the sending function for the disadvantaged.

Senders and receivers have differences in personal and social characteristics that may affect the communication strategy. The characteristics of both are equally important. Specific to the communication process, the senders and receivers have reciprocal tasks and responsibilities to fulfill. Recognition of this should help place the importance of communication channels in perspective. All of the technological developments in communications should not lead us to place channel selection as the first priority in the communication process. In some instances we should be aware that the sender (when advantaged) and receiver (when disadvantaged) are so different that no channel exists without including an array of third parties, thus complicating the communication process. Interpreters between English-speaking change agents and Spanish-speaking disadvantaged would be an example.

Finally, the discussion groups—while focusing on the content of their respective areas (i.e., health, social services, employment, and educational problems of the poor)–identified several sources of noise in the communication process. The forms of noise included:

- Differences between the senders and receivers in language, culture, values, and attitudes
- Overemphasis by program developers on sending rather than receiving
- Boundary maintenance between senders and receivers, agencies concerned with the problem, and representatives of the disadvantaged
- Lack of credibility, knowledge, and trust between sender and receiver
- The high frequency of nonverbal noise in our interpersonal communications process. (Actions of the agency representatives may speak so loud that the disadvantaged cannot hear what they are saying.) Nonverbal messages tend to cluster and become generalized into stereotypes. Thus, a sender who is from a minority group, a distinguishable subculture, or a government agency is immediately categorized by the receiver, preventing the intended communication from occurring.

E. WALTER COWARD, JR.
LAWRENCE GANSEMER

Goals in Communication with the Disadvantaged

In dealing with the problem of change through communication, the Workshop participants dealt first with the question of the *direction* of change. Consideration of the goals of programs designed to assist the disadvantaged is critical, but the goals of the bureaucractic elite and the rural disadvantaged are often in conflict. Therefore, a major criterion for communicating with the disadvantaged is to identify and formulate the goals.

Sharp's paper, written from the viewpoint of OEO's Communication Development Division, reflects a major (though not exclusive) concern with the transfer of information from the advantaged to the disadvantaged through television. OEO's role in CATV (cable television) begins by analyzing television programming characteristics that are of sufficient interest and quality to gain the attention of the poor and minority disadvantaged.

The discussion dealt with a further use of CATV for the poor, i.e., using the disadvantaged as the source of information. Questions of organizational and community structure, program format, and audience target were asked. The OEO Communication Division sees itself primarily as the producer of the televised information. Perhaps, also, there is need for a communications development organization at the local level developing the capacity of the disadvantaged to be the source as well as the feedback of information.

Witherite's position as a community aide illustrates the difficult problem of communication within the bureaucracies themselves. (It is certain that conflicts can also be found *within* the communities of the disadvantaged.) Her role represents an increasingly common one: that of linking the agency and the community. As agencies increasingly recognize this role, there is both the *need* and the *opportunity* to formulate goals out of the interaction of bureaucracy and community.

If bureaucracies fail to be sensitive and responsive to this process, they run the risk of losing their local agent performing the linking role. This may occur in part because of the individual's greater loyalty to the community than to the agency. Such a loss will be particularly detrimental, because the "dropouts" will often remain in the community and remind some, at least, of the insensitivity of the agency toward the community.

In considering the relation of local agent to the community, the agencies ought to be especially cognizant of his role, particularly in regard to demands and pressures for modification and flexibility in goal formation.

The following points summarize those raised in the discussion group:

- *A major objective of communicating with the rural disadvantaged is the formation of program goals.* The goals of assisting agencies need to emerge from a process of communication interaction involving the agency and the disadvantaged.

Participants noted that too often goals are determined at the top levels of an agency. One example of the limitations of this top-level process cited an agency's decision to discontinue a popular local boxing program, because of its unfavorable image, in favor of a more acceptable homemaking program that attracted only a tiny group of participants. It was observed that agency-formulated goals frequently relate more to the values of middle-class people than to those of low-income people.

Communication can be an important tool for listening to "client" messages about desired goals and policies. Some of the major goals of the disadvantaged involve the desire for better education for their youth, specific forms of aid (e.g., low-interest farm loans), and the removal of job discrimination. They seek recognition of the advantages they have in terms of family cooperation, their sense of family solidarity, and spiritual togetherness. Thus communication is a process of sharing cultural values and solutions to human problems.

There was wide agreement that the disadvantaged should participate in formulating goals. (Organization formulated goals are often implemented *before* the disadvantated are consulted.) It was recognized that such participation will require innovative organizational procedures and arrangements, although relatively little is known about doing this. If such a strategy of goal formation were widely followed by assisting agencies, both public and private, it could have a positive effect on the current problem of goal overlap and conflict among different agency programs.

- *Communication in formulating goals requires feedback mechanisms.* In order that an agency may both know that it is representing the interests of the disadvantaged and is involving them in the goal formation procedure, feedback is necessary. Feedback consists of messages coming *from* the disadvantaged *to* the agency. If an agency listens to the messages of its clientele, and incorporates this feedback into the operation of the agency, participation of the disadvantaged is inevitable.

A problem with feedback occurs, however, when the views of the experts conflict with those of the disadvantaged. For instance, the latter may choose to learn skills that may be evaluated as "dated" by the experts.

The development of a feedback mechanism avoids the peril of an organization talking too much to itself. Moreover, feedback allows the disadvantaged to share more intelligently in the benefits of technology (especially mass media). For instance, one discussant noted that radio programmers can take account of the view of the disadvantaged through farm radio forums (as has been done extensively in India). Local groups can be organized to listen to broadcasts and discuss how the material applies to their own situation. They can forward comments, questions, and reports back to the producers.

Although the discussants placed major emphasis on the question of the need for an agency to *receive* feedback from the disadvantaged, it was also mentioned that agencies should provide feedback *to* the disadvantaged. For instance, if a program was promised to the community but then withheld, the discussants felt that agencies should give a credible explanation to the community, if for no other reason than to provide some rationale for community trust in future projects.

- *Communication for goal formation needs to deal with both cognitive and affective aspects.* An obvious factor in the credibility of a given communication is the degree to which the communicator shows sincerity, trust, and commitment. This is often related to his role in the relationship. For instance, a neighborhood aide may work as an agent of an impersonal government agency, or as a helpful friend, or as an "aunt" or "sister."

Feelings common among the disadvantaged that affect the perception of messages need to be fed back. Such feelings include the sense of powerlessness felt by the disadvantaged, the subtle differences of identity among the various cultures of the poor; the need for a sense of accomplishment, self-worth, and individual participation. Feelings of alienation and helplessness could be reduced if the disadvantaged were placed in positions to "help themselves," and thereby receive some of the credit for their own efforts.

With reference to differences among subcultures, it was noted that most people have no difficulty recognizing the racial or ethnic characteristics of foreign groups but do have trouble in recognizing racial and ethnic differences within the United States. A greater sense of group identity and social belonging could result from recognition of subcultural differences within the American society.

The critical need for communication of both information and feelings suggests the next point: the utility of personal contact with the disadvantaged.

- *Communication for goal formation requires personal contact with the disadvantaged.* There was wide agreement among participants that to get feedback and to formulate goals, communication must evolve through personal contact. Listening to the poor cannot be accomplished by reading their reports or listening to their radio or television programs. Because the disadvantaged lack access to formal communication channels (e.g., group meetings) and lack skills to report through bureaucractic forms, personal contact must be provided to get feedback from them.

Thus many participants emphasized the need for the assisting agencies, as well as the disadvantaged themselves, to fully utilize local personnel to communicate the needs and opinions of the disadvantaged to those making the decisions in the formation of agency goals. Group leaders from among the poor could be used as linkage personnel. Some suggested that since the county agent's role is to represent, in part, the needs of the community, change agents and the rural advantaged could take upon themselves to discreetly educate the county agent in this role if it should appear that he is unaware of this responsibility.

- *Personal communication with the disadvantaged is facilitated through the use of paraprofessionals.* Numerous programs have attempted to incorporate the disadvantaged at the action level. Examples of this paraprofessional role include nutrition aides working with home economists and Spanish-speaking extension aides assisting Mexican–American farmers.

As indigenous members of the disadvantaged, these aides enhance personal contact with the disadvantaged for at least two major reasons: They are viewed by them as credible senders and receivers, and they possess knowledge of the verbal and nonverbal styles of communication used by the particular group of disadvantaged to be reached.

Most programs using paraprofessionals have viewed their prime use as "senders" of information, e.g., nutrition aides get into the homes of the disadvantaged, whereas home economists frequenty do not. However, some participants suggested that additional consideration should be given to using the paraprofessionals as channels of feedback from the disadvantaged. The linking role of the paraprofessional offers the potential of increasing both communication *to* and *from* the poor.

While the use of paraprofessionals as channels of personal contact has been successful in some situations, participants were concerned with identifying alternative means.

- *The inclusion of paraprofessionals in agency programs may increase demands for goal formation and modification.* As illustrated by Witherite's comments, the paraprofessional can be placed in a very difficult position if the agency represented is unresponsive to feedback and attempts unilaterally to form new goals or modify old ones.

Discussants noted that agencies employing paraprofessionals need to be sensitive to the peculiar dual-status of these individuals and to adopt procedures to support the paraprofessional's status and credibility in his home community. Several of the paraprofessionals attending the Workshop noted that their actual job performance is frequently much broader than their assignment, such as the nutrition aide who lamented having to talk with a housewife about so many other problems that "I never did get to talk about food."

It was observed that the willingness of an agency employing paraprofessionals to view goal formation as a dynamic process is crucial to success in such situations. The information collected at the community level and transmitted up the line by the paraprofessional (combined with similar information from others) must be regarded as an important element in the formation and pursuit of agency goals.

Emphasis in this Workshop was given to the need for two-way communication, feedback, and participation—all intended to improve exchange of information and to provide a setting for the emergence and identification of goals for change.

When are the poor really helped? By whose standards? Indigenous leaders recruited to work in social service programs may be caught in the middle if this point is not clear.

In summation, discussants noted that agencies typically work from a legislative or executive mandate that attempts to specify agency goals. If these are not conceived and stated broadly, the idea of goal formation in cooperation with the disadvantaged through more effective communication may operate under severe constraints. What if this process results in the identification of goals that are outside the mandate of the agency (or even run counter to it)? Consideration must be given to formulating broad and perhaps diverse mandates for those public and private agencies engaged in communicating with the disadvantaged.

PAUL R. EBERTS
BRUCE JOHN

Problems Faced by Organizations and Agencies in Communicating with the Disadvantaged

A basic goal of agencies in communicating with the disadvantaged may be redefined as helping them to solve their own problems. This may sound easy to achieve, but it is actually very complex. For agencies to do this, they first must assist people in defining their problems; then assist them in specifying alternative means of resolving the problems, and finally assist them in locating facilities to implement their solutions.

Personal interaction is the most effective communication means to accomplish these ends. The mass media are effective in some instances, but they lack the immediate feedback of the two-way communication in personal contacts. It is not only in interaction with professionals that clients learn important information and skills. People generally learn most of their skills from contacts with parents, friends, neighbors, and other acquaintances. A problem faced by agencies, therefore, is to organize the various means of personal contact, to achieve the most effective results for varying situations.

How can organizations develop and maintain conditions for the free flow of ideas, both internally, among the organizations themselves that are concerned to serve the disadvantaged, and between the organization and the people they seek to serve? Numerous comments indicated that these problems are central to organizations. Nobody listens. There is no two-way communication. So much paperwork is required for self-maintenance functions (most of which is filed, not used), that organizations have little time left for helping clients.

People also tend to develop their own bailiwicks in these organizations, often failing to appreciate what others are doing. The board of directors is isolated from the staff; the staff is isolated from "line" workers, who in turn maintain their distance from clients. Clients, expecially more distant rural clients, are not served, and each set of workers feels the other is not pulling its fair share of the load. Isolation leads to feelings of alienation and disloyalty, instead of mutuality. Disloyalty lowers both output and morale.

Although this sequence can be changed by organizing better communication patterns, nobody seems able to do much about it. Consensus in the Workshop indicated that communication within most organizations serving the disadvantaged should be improved. Three general techniques for doing this appeared.

First, the board of directors, who make most of the policy decisions, should include people from more diverse backgrounds. People from different levels within the organization should be represented, as should people from various population segments in the community, especially the disadvantaged.

Second, representation in problem-solving groups within the organization should include all levels of the organization. However, formal representation is less important than continuity in participation.

Third, representatives from the various agencies serving the disadvantaged should meet more regularly to exchange ideas and coordinate programs.

Emphasis on these three approaches in organizational structure can facilitate open circulation of ideas to and from the various segments of the organization and of the public with which it works. Well-chosen representatives of the disadvantaged, if given appropriate opportunities and encouraged to participate, can help keep organizations focused on the needs they are designed to serve.

A final set of organizational principles is for agencies to be aware of, as well as take advantage of, other groups in the community who can assist or retard communication. Macneal noted early in the Workshop three isolated sets of people in her home town–the educated, the wage earners, and the disadvantaged–who do not talk to each other except through a few people who can bridge the gap. In this community the flow of ideas is at a minimum. If the flow of ideas could be increased, the task of agencies would be easier, and as a result the disadvantaged would be helped to increase their skills.

Apparently, most communities lack these types of facilities for a flow of ideas. For various reasons, the flow is actually in a fragmented state. Population segments, as well as agencies themselves, are isolated from one another, except in their formal, institutional, or work relations.

Moreover, ideas flow downard in the agencies, but communication upward is at a minimum. Likewise, communication within the neighborhood is most often informal and random between neighbors and friends, with very little feedback beyond an extra-neighborhood level. The best sections of town are separated *physically* from the next economic level, who live in different neighborhoods from the next, and finally down to the disadvantaged who live in shacks at the edge of town or in isolated rural areas. In addition, people are also isolated from each other at work as well. Very few organizations cross these lines in the population.

In earlier days, churches and political parties performed the communication role in communities. Today they tend to be based and receive their support primarily from single segments of the population and seemingly do not take seriously their former mediating and reconciling roles. Without a mediating role of churches and political parties in communities, the agencies and organizations, whose primary concerns are with the disadvantaged, find their jobs more difficult.

However, it is not impossible to have a more fluid community. There need be no changes in the form of the organizations, or even in the location of neighborhoods. The change can be in the organizations that can have memberships and directors of a different composition. The board of directors can include people from each level of the agency. In addition, above the neighborhood level are organizations (e.g., church, civic, political, and PTA) that can also include people from each kind of neighborhood. Such organizations could be self-consciously organized to include people from every type of neighborhood in their leadership and executive committees.

From the principles laid out for a fluid community, in contrast to a community of isolated groups, we would expect two essential qualities among the people: first, a greater ability to handle personal and interpersonal problems by the people, and, second, a greater respect and mutuality for the problems of people in population segments other than one's own. Because of the greater degree of interrelatedness between the population segments, more people in the fluid, well-integrated community would be able to see and learn from others as they resolve their problems, as well as become more appeciative of others and their problems. An indirect result of such contacts then is that people in the community would develop feelings of greater mutuality and goodwill toward the disadvantaged of their community than would be the case for the people living in isolated conditions. The underlying reason for these differing attitudes would, therefore, be because of the different patterns of organized personal contacts in the two communities.

A final comment in this regard seemed to be agreed upon. The longer it takes disadvantaged segments to achieve autonomous roles in problem resolution, the farther behind they are when they finally do reach this point (if they ever do). People who have these skills can easily learn new skills: They differentiate, associate, and organize things and ideas readily. But those left behind continue to get farther behind. It takes more and more effort and resources to assist them in catching up. When this happens, those who have the advantage of such skills become remote from the poor and thus find it more and more difficult to recognize, understand, empathize, and even communicate with the disadvantaged poor. They neither want to help the disadvantaged, nor know how to help when the desire is there. (The very fact of this Workshop attests to this situation.)

The diverse skill levels within the total population compounds the clashing interests that divide groups in society. Not only is it difficult to bring them all together, but, when they do try to communicate, the outcome is mostly "noise." Reorganizing personal contacts within and between organizations, and within and between organizations and disadvantaged populations, can, however, if given the chance, help diverse groups to cooperate, communicate, and understand each other better.

JACK McCORMACK
J. STEVEN PICOU

Characteristics of the Disadvantaged

Disadvantaged rural Amerians are generally characterized by residential, economic, social, and psychological conditions. They reside in nonurban areas, have meager incomes, and are severely restricted in their social participation in the rural community. It is commonly thought that these characteristics, along with many personality traits engendered by these factors, tend to "lock" the disadvantaged rural American into a cycle of tragedy. This cycle is associated with a social condition labeled poverty. Varden Fuller (1965), in a most revealing statement concerning rural poverty, has noted:

> Rural poverty is intensive, extensive and intractable . . . yet, it is remote and obscure. The rural population–widely dispersed, racially and culturally heterogeneous, socially and politically incohesive–does not compete well for attention.

The primary objective of this section of the Workshop was to delineate the characteristics of the rural disadvantaged and the implications related to attempts of the advantaged to communicate with the disadvantaged.

In contrast to the urban poor, who live in physical congestion, the rural poor live in physical isolation. The life of the rural poor is inextricably related to the physical environment. They often live miles from neighbors in houses without indoor plumbing, electricity, or running water. Living conditions may provide insufficient shelter from the climate, causing extreme survival crises during hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, and droughts.

The low-income level of the rural disadvantaged can be attributed to a number of factors. There are few job opportunities in most rural areas. Farming has been transformed into a highly mechanized, large-scale operation; consequently, the need for farm laborers has been drastically reduced. Even when the farm laborer secures employment, he is often paid far less than the standard minimum wage. Yet, family-organized subsistence farming often fails to meet the basic needs of the rural disadvantaged.

In addition to being physically isolated, the rural disadvantaged are socially isolated. According to participants in the work groups, they do not have formal political or voluntary groups, nor do they share in the social concerns of the advantaged segments of the population around them.

This social isolation results in a lack of representation in any of the seats of power. Participants in the Workshop, who represented the disadvantaged, expressed the belief that they are not only *outside* the ordinary functions of social processes, but that insiders (the advantaged) "run the world" without awareness of, or concern for, the disadvantaged. These participants spoke of the categorical exclusion (or noninclusion) of their families from church and civic groups. They spoke of their children being isolated and labeled as "low track" from their first day in school and being "damned with that stigma until they graduate or—more likely—drop out."

Some white representatives of the disadvantaged felt efforts by the dominant segments of society to socialize the disadvantaged were directed toward the nonwhite poor. Nonwhite disadvantaged participants felt that even these efforts were for the urban rather than rural disadvantaged.

The most obvious psychological condition of being rurally disadvantaged is hopelessness. They are cut off from relationships with other segments of society and see no way of being included. They are, from the first grade, the "failure caste" of public education, with no way of escaping. (A stigma on the children can be determined merely in the family name.) They are locked in poverty and see no means of obtaining the affluent level of living characteristic of our society.

They see no way that any effort by them could effect any desirable change. They are too separated from each other to lobby for change. They are too few in any given area to be organized as an effective power bloc. They are totally dependent for change on the beneficence of a society that has not yet demonstrated the desire or will to change their condition. They *are* helpless and *feel hopeless.*

Few of the programs that are supposed to be for the benefit of the rural disadvantaged are perceived by them *to be* of benefit. Communication between agencies and their disadvantaged clients has not persuaded the disadvantaged that desirable change or opportunities are real possibilities. Some Workshop participants thought this communication failure may be because initiators and directors of programs for the disadvantaged have not communicated directly with the disadvantaged.

Others thought that the assorted information does not reach them effectively because the information is sent via mass media; none of which the disadvantaged hear or see *for informational* purposes. All believe that agencies tend to have no mechanism for receiving information *from* the disadvantaged and that the disadvantaged have no way to break into the communications systems of the powered classes.

The descriptions of effective efforts to work and communicate with the poor all involved face-to-face, repeated, personal interaction between agent and client There were no examples of effective change or communication that were not based on the trust that develops in interpersonal relationships.

The following conclusions came from the discussion:

- The disadvantaged person and his code of values must be respected by any who plan for and attempt to change his life.
- The disadvantaged must be adequately represented in all the decision-making processes that affect them.

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WILLIAM KUVLESKY
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Methods of Communication

The first basic proposition to reach a high level of consensus among the Workshop participants was that communication between the source of action and the target should be viewed as a dynamic, fully reciprocal interaction, where the source and target simultaneously hold the status of "sender" and "receiver" (as described by the Shannon–Weaver Model, presented by Brubaker).

The participants felt negatively about the effectiveness of past and present programs created to help the poor, including many of those in which they were involved and for which they had responsibility. The explanation for the failure was attributed to the unfortunate tendency of agenices to view the communication process as a one-way flow: the agency viewing itself as the sender of information to the poor who, presumably like so many thirsty sponges, would eagerly soak it up. The unresponsiveness, rigidity, and perceived unfriendliness of the agencies was blamed on the lack of recognition of the need for feedback in setting goals, gaining trust, and relating meaningfully to the poor.

Much of the discussion focused on how variability in the function of communication, source of action, and target (or receiver of action) influences the mode or communication.

VARIABILITY OF FUNCTION

Most of the participants regarded the establishment of effective communication per se, between the source and target as an important prerequisite to the accomplishment of any other end. Given this first, overriding objective, variability in function could still occur along two levels of purpose. First, what kind of change on the part of the disadvantaged is desired, if any? Second, if change is desired, what purpose will a particular mode of communication serve? Variability here is indicated by positive sentiment (e.g., liking, concern, interest, and sincerity) by the change agents for the target group, directives of knowledge, and stimulation of feedback from the target group regarding relevance of objectives and modes of operation.

To accomplish ends one and two described above, personal, face-to-face contact would be essential. This might, in fact, be the only way these ends could be reached. Judicious use of short spot announcements on television or radio might, in some cases, accomplish the second objective above.

VARIABILITY IN SOURCE

By source, we refer to the initiator of action—the stimulus. It was largely presumed in the discussion that government agencies (bureaucracies) were the sources. This influenced the nature of discussion relative to variations in needs of diverse publics serving as targets. The explicit consideration of other alternative sources (e.g., voluntary associations and the poor themselves) might have led to consideration of modes of communication and suggestions in this regard that were not, in fact, covered in this Workshop session.

VARIABILITY IN TARGET

There seemed to be a very strong consensus that considerable variability existed in targets, both among the poor and in terms of publics (or targets) that were not poor.

- *Among the poor or disadvantaged*

It was presumed that much heterogeneity existed among the disadvantaged and consequently much variation existed in their needs (to alleviate their disadvantages) and in the requirements for establishing effective contact with them. The group clearly thought that direct personal contact, particularly through the use of indigenous aides, was the best form of communication to handle this heterogeneity. This suggestion is quite clearly compatible with that emerging in other discussions of goals. In fact, it was the general feeling of the group that any alternative form had little utility.

- *Among the agents of an agency and among agencies*

The lack of responsiveness of agencies and other relevant publics to the perceived needs of the poor, resulting in the one-way conception of the communication process, is largely due to the impervious nature of the bureaucracy and the resulting insulation of bureaucrats from the poor. One suggestion that evolved here was to get the agencies to give their staff periodic field assignments on a rotating basis. This would serve to open their eyes and minds to the problems of the disadvantaged, the need for feedback, and the flexibility required. Another alternative would be for the agency staff to be required to take formal courses in the social sciences, particularly on the subject of ethnic styles of life.

- *Among the advantaged*

It was also concluded that there was a need to establish effective communication with the advantaged public in local areas, to make them aware of the disadvantaged and how the needs of these people influenced their own well-being. Suggestions for effective modes of communication for this purpose included the possibility of attractive mass media educational programs and the use of community voluntary associations.

In summary, it was the consensus that the Workshop had been useful as a start in structuring the problem and sharpening understanding of the need to more consciously evaluate modes of communication relative to ends and targets.

It was also the judgment of the group that this small start would be made more effective if it were followed immediately by additional action: (a) more thorough discussion among diverse concerned publics about specific needs; and (b) better understanding of various modes of communication and their probable consequences.

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